Men-at-Arms

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Napoleon's Scouts of the Imperial Guard

Ronald Pawly • Illustrated by Patrice Courcelle

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Napoleon's Scouts of the Imperial Guard

Ronald Pawly • Illustrated by Patrice Courcelle
Series editor Martin Windrow

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NAPOLEON'S SCOUTS OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD

INTRODUCTION

In November 1813, Napoleon's Grande Armée – once the terror of an entire continent, who had carried their victory-bedecked banners through the conquered streets of most of the capitals of Europe – dragged themselves westwards through Germany to the Rhine, seeking safety behind the borders of France herself.

For the second time in two years, Napoleon had started a campaign with more than 400,000 troops, and had ended it with fewer than 70,000 men. In the winter of 1812/13 it had taken an extraordinary effort to rebuild Napoleon's army after the Russian disaster. Now, defeated at Leipzig by the converging armies of Austria, Russia, Prussia and Sweden, he faced the same task all over again: reinventing his army with raw conscripts, around an ever weaker skeleton of veteran officers and NCOs, while short of many military necessities – and above all, of cavalry to screen the threatened borders and report enemy movements. Despite the ease with which the French had smashed through the Bavarian Gen von Wrede's inept attempt to block their retreat at Hanau on 30 October, there was little doubt that the days when the French eagles had swept forward in glory were gone for ever.

Now, for the first time since the 1790s, French soldiers faced the prospect of having to fight on their own soil; yet even now Napoleon might have avoided this, and kept his throne, if he had seized an opportunity for peace which was open to him for just two weeks. While most of Europe was ranged against him, only the Russians and the Prussians were eager to actually invade France, to avenge the ruin and humiliation they themselves had suffered at French hands. Britain, although Napoleon's most consistent enemy, was concerned – as always – with preserving a balance between the Continental powers, and had no wish to see France utterly destroyed. The Austrians' main war aim was the recapture of northern Italy, and after all, Napoleon's Empress Marie-Louise was the daughter of the Austrian emperor. Spain and Portugal were exhausted by the long Peninsular War, and their armies were for all practical purposes dependent upon Britain.

In conference at Frankfurt on 16 November 1813, the Allies agreed to offer terms to the French based on recognition of France's natural geographic borders on the Rhine, the Alps and

Don Cossack and Crimean Tatar. The Russian army employed Cossacks in large numbers; fighting as vanguard, rearguard and raiding troops, they were the bane of Napoleon's armies. He had considered raising similar units from 1805 onwards, but it was only at the end of the 1813 campaign that he put his ideas partly into practice with the creation of the Scouts of the Imperial Guard. (Original watercolour by Ludwig Wolf; Anne S.K.Brown Library, Providence, RI, USA)

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the Pyrenees. Napoleon, ever confident in his own genius, overplayed his hand. He stalled for time; but by the end of November less generous terms were all that was on offer, based on the frontiers of 1792, with France ceding important territories in the Rhineland and the Low Countries. These conditions were probably never intended to be acceptable; and in December the three Allied armies of the Sixth Coalition beyond the Rhine prepared for renewed operations.[1]

The Empire's last resources

In the weeks following the battle of Hanau, many thousands of French stragglers had gradually made their way eastwards, until Napoleon had some 100,000 soldiers on the Rhine. However, the mere numbers were deceptive: nearly half of them were wounded, sick from typhoid, or otherwise unfit for active duty. Well over 100,000 others had been left behind, isolated in fortified cities across Germany and the Low Countries. Most of these were well-trained troops, equipped with some hundreds of guns, wagon trains and ample arsenals of arms and ammunition; but – with the exception of Marshal Davout's corps, trapped around Hamburg, and serving no clear purpose – most of them would soon be forced to surrender.

Other substantial forces were also unavailable to the Emperor, since the eastern frontiers were not the only approach to France threatened by the Allies. In Italy, Napoleon's stepson and viceroy Eugène de Beauharnais, with some 50,000 men, stood in the path of about the same number of Austrians under Gen Bellegarde; but the King of Naples, the faithless Marshal Murat, had long been negotiating secretly with the Allies in an attempt to save his throne if he changed sides, and his defection in early January 1814 would tip the balance against Eugène. In the Pyrenees, Marshals Soult and Suchet, with 100,000 men, stood ready to try to stem the advance from Spain of the 125,000-strong combined British, Spanish and Portuguese forces under Wellington.

By early January 1814, the whole of Germany, Spain and the Illyrian Isles were lost to the Emperor; Holland would soon follow, as would Italy. The Empire was crumbling, and as more and more of the Emperor's subjects and forced allies distanced themselves from his regime, so the Grande Armée was denied recruiting grounds where it had previously found cannon-fodder. Nevertheless, thanks to his extraordinary qualities of organization and leadership, Napoleon would soon create a new army.

His original target of 900,000 men was wildly unrealistic, however; the conscription of 1813 had already taken almost all the available unmarried young men. On 5 November his officials reported that an immediate levy of 140,000 men was possible, but only by extending conscription to married men. Since many of these had married specifically to avoid the draft, such a measure was liable to provoke widespread resistance and evasion. Instead, the government decided to conscript only the unmarried, and to transfer 100,000 men (both single and married) from the National Guard to the regular army. Retired

1 During his whole reign as Emperor, Napoleon had to fight against successive coalitions financed by his implacable enemy Great Britain. Following his invasion of Russia in 1812, Russia and Britain formed the nucleus of what became the Sixth Coalition. Spain and Portugal soon followed, and after the French retreat into Poland, Prussia left Napoleon's alliance and joined the Coalition on 27 February 1813. After the battles of Lützen and Bautzen and the armistice of June–August 1813, Austria also joined the Coalition, followed by Sweden (under the renegade French Marshal Bernadotte), Bavaria, and a growing number of smaller German states.

OPPOSITE **Standard-bearer and officer of the Polish *Krakus*. This Cossack-style light cavalry regiment served as scouts and raiders in support of the Line cavalry. Each of the four squadrons carried the name of the area where it was raised and reportedly wore uniforms in local colours; these illustrations show dark blue faced with crimson – including the traditional cartridge pockets on the breast – and white 'metal' and trim. Armed with a lance (without pennon), a sabre and a pistol, the peasant troopers received rudimentary training; they had no talent for exercises or parades, and even trumpeters were omitted – apparently the rankers were unable to learn the different calls. All signalling was done by means of the tall horsetail standard – this *'bountchouk'* had been used by the Polish cavalry of the 17th and 18th centuries. One of the few occasions when the *Krakus* paraded was during the second half of the 1813 campaign, in the presence of the Emperor. Reminded of his long-postponed plans to raise Cossack-style units for his own army, he would soon create the Scouts of the Guard. (Collection Paul Meganck, Brussels, Belgium)**

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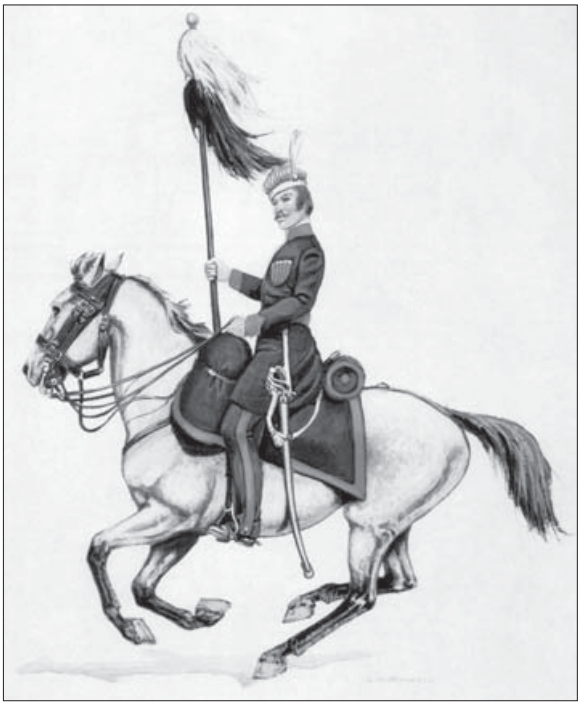

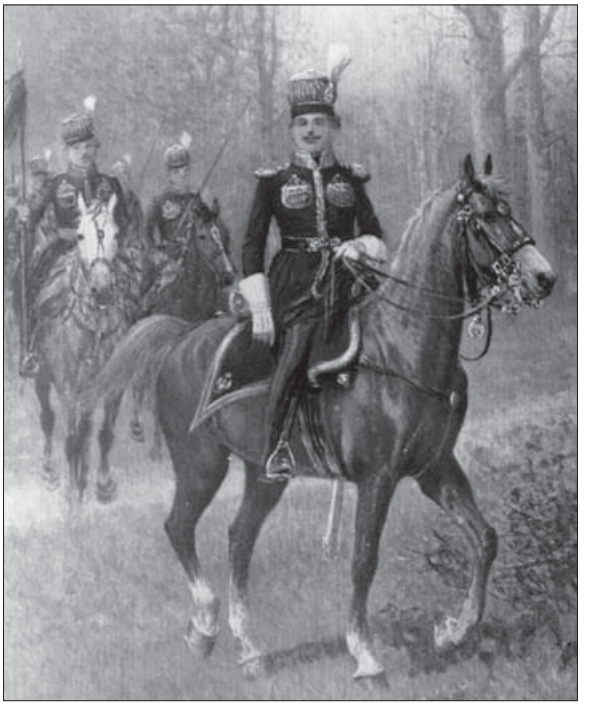

veterans were also recalled to the colours; and some experienced troops were also available due to the collapse of Joseph Bonaparte's client Spanish kingdom. Returning French soldiers of the former Spanish Royal Guard were employed to strengthen some of Napoleon's Imperial Guard units, and others came from the former army of the defected King of Naples.

* * *

Since the wars of the Revolution, the French had encountered the use of Cossacks by the Russian army. They had proved to be the ideal light cavalry for scouting ahead of the army, or for infiltration in small groups behind enemy lines, creating havoc and disorder by hit-and-run tactics. After the Austerlitz campaign in 1805, Napoleon conceived the idea of creating some kind of mounted vanguard that could repel and fight the Cossacks by operating in the same way that they did. A year later, during the Prussian campaign of 1806, he discussed the creation of four regiments of *'éclaireurs à cheval'* or Mounted Scouts. Napoleon suggested mounting them on horses from the south of France, specifically the Camargue. During the Italian campaign of 1796 the 22nd Mounted Chasseurs had already used these extremely robust horses, which were only shoed on the front hooves, and could be kept in the open air at all times. Their endurance and usefulness was again confirmed during the campaign in Egypt.

On 9 July 1806 the project to create four regiments of Mounted Scouts was taken further. Each regiment was to consist of four squadrons, and a remount depot was to be organized in the Camargue itself. A few days later, on 13 July, the Emperor wrote to Eugène in Italy that such regiments should also be raised for the Italian Army. However, the whole project remained unrealized, with the exception of perhaps one regiment, the Belgian *Chevau-légers belges*. On 30 September 1806

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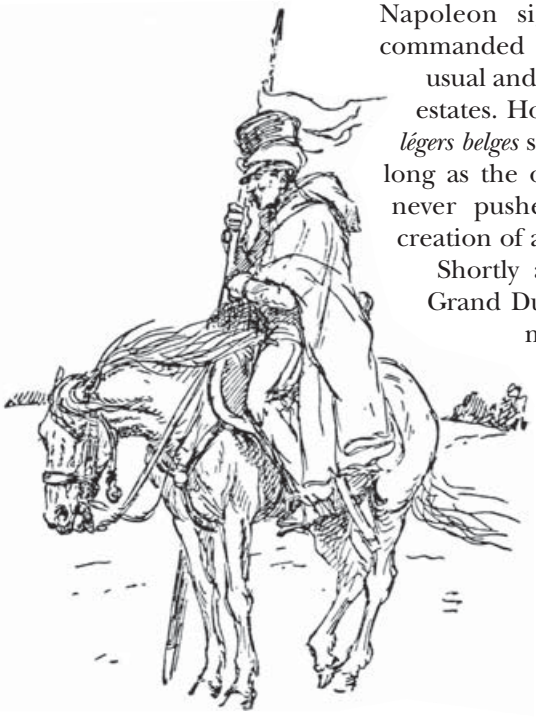

The Lithuanian Tatars were organized by the French in liberated Russian Lithuania from late August 1812 onwards. Lack of time allowed the raising of a single squadron only, led by *Chef d'escadron* Mustapha Murza Achmatowicz. Their first action was during the defence of Vilna on 10–12 December 1812. The remnants of the squadron followed Napoleon back to France, and served with the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers and the 3rd Scouts of the Imperial Guard. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri, Salon de Provence, France)

Napoleon signed a decree creating this light horse regiment, commanded by the Duke of Arenberg; its mounts were smaller than usual and came from some wild breeds living on the duke's German estates. However, the Emperor was a man of habit, and the *Chevau-légers belges* soon became the 27th Mounted Chasseurs of the Line. As long as the outcome of a campaign was favourable to Napoleon, he never pushed suggested innovations forward to reality, and the creation of an answer to the Cossacks was delayed time after time.

Shortly after the retreat from Moscow, Napoleon ordered the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to rebuild its army, which – like those of many of France's allies and client states – had suffered very heavy losses during the Russian campaign. A national mobilization was proclaimed on 10 January 1813, with the idea of involving peasants, who would be formed into units equipped and paid for by their communities and officered by local gentry. Every 50 families had to offer one 'volunteer' aged between 18 and 40 years. However, when the Russians invaded Poland less than half the expected 12,000 men had been raised. These peasant units included Cossack-like cavalry known as *Krakus*. This new 'peasant cavalry' was organized into squadrons 500 strong, led by local noblemen, and affiliated to Line cavalry regiments to act as supporting light horse.

In practice, the majority of these 'agricultural' troopers showed themselves unfitted for front line duties, and were transferred to the infantry; but a hard core of some 900 peasant riders were united into a single unit of *Krakus*. Shortly after reviewing them, Napoleon said that he urgently needed 3,000 similar troops as an answer to the Russian Cossacks. Together with the Lithuanian Tatars, the *Krakus* would fight alongside the French until the Emperor's first abdication.

Facing the prospect of fighting on French territory and with reduced regular forces, Napoleon hoped that the French population would rise up under the spur of foreign invasion as they had done during the glory days of the French Revolution. As one aspect of this anticipated war of national resistance, at the end of 1813 he at last decided to realize his earlier ideas and to create Scout units. The intention was that they would act as a vanguard to the regular regiments to which they would be assigned, and perhaps also fight their way behind the enemy's lines in co-operation with patriotic uprisings by the French citizenry of occupied regions.

REORGANIZATION OF THE GUARD CAVALRY

Creation of the Scouts

After the Russian campaign the Imperial Guard had been steadily increased in strength and importance, becoming in a sense an army within an army, since Napoleon's expectations of the mass of young and inexperienced conscripted recruits to the Grande Armée were realistically modest. He would rebuild his army in 1814 as he had done in 1813, creating even more Guard units than before; he believed that the prestige of the corps, and the example of the strong armature of

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veterans within its ranks, would be of value in fitting even new conscripts for active service more quickly. Three of the new Guard units would be Scouts, partially armed with lances.

After Napoleon's return to Paris on 9 November 1813 this idea, with which the Emperor had toyed since the end of 1805, quickly matured. A letter to the Minister of War, signed on 3 December, asked for a report on the formation of a Polish Cossack corps. He believed that at that date some seven Polish regiments were in garrison at Sedan (the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th and 8th Lancers, as well as the 1st Mounted Chasseurs and the *Krakus*, together with some 1,800 horses). From these he hoped to raise four standard lancer regiments of 500 horses each and, from the remaining Polish cavalry and infantry, to form two or three regiments of 'Cossacks'.

On 4 December 1813, Napoleon decreed the reorganization of the Cavalry of the Imperial Guard for the year 1814, based on the creation of the Scout regiments. Article 1 of the decree specified that within the Cavalry of the Guard, three regiments of *éclaireurs de la Garde* were to be created. They were to be mounted on horses of 4 *pieds* 3 *pouces* high (1.38m–1.4m, or between 13.8 and 14 hands), and of a minimum age of six years. Uniformed as hussars (like the Guards of Honour), each regiment was to be composed of four squadrons each of 250 men.[2] Each regiment was to be attached to, commanded and administered by one of the existing regiments of Guard Cavalry: the 1st Regiment of Scouts was to be attached to the Mounted Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard; the 2nd Regiment, to the Dragoons; and the 3rd Regiment, to the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers.

Article 2 gave details of the overall organization of the Cavalry of the Imperial Guard; in all cases squadron establishment was to be 250 men:

Heavy Cavalry
Mounted Grenadiers – 6 sqns = 1,500 men
Dragoons – *idem*
Light Cavalry
Mounted Chasseurs – 10 sqns = 2,500 men
1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers – 4 sqns = 1,000 men
2nd (Dutch or 'Red') Light Horse Lancers – 10 sqns = 2,500 men
Scouts (Éclaireurs)
1st Regiment – 4 sqns = 1,000 men
2nd Regiment – *idem*
3rd Regiment – *idem*
Total: 48 sqns = 12,000 men.

The remaining articles of the decree dealt with matters such as recruiting, horses, uniforms, equipment and pay. Five days later, the Emperor signed a second decree in which he specified in further detail where the men were to be found, how they were to be dressed, and what position they should have within the traditional hierarchy of the Imperial Guard.

First of all, the crucial question of how to fill the ranks of his Guard Cavalry regiments was addressed. The four regiments of Guards of Honour were to provide between them 200 troopers to complete the numbers – 30 troopers for the Mounted Grenadiers, 30 for the Dragoons, and 140 for the 2nd Light Horse Lancers, the selection being made according to the height of the men.

General Count Lefebvre-Desnoëttes (1773–1822), Colonel of the Mounted Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard during the 1813 campaign; in 1814 he would command a Guard Cavalry division including Scout units. Wounded at Brienne, he later rallied to Napoleon in 1815 and followed him to Waterloo, where he commanded the Light Cavalry of the Imperial Guard. After the Second Restoration he left for exile in the United States; he was later pardoned, but was lost in a shipwreck while returning to France.

2 See MAA 378, *Napoleon's Guards of Honour*

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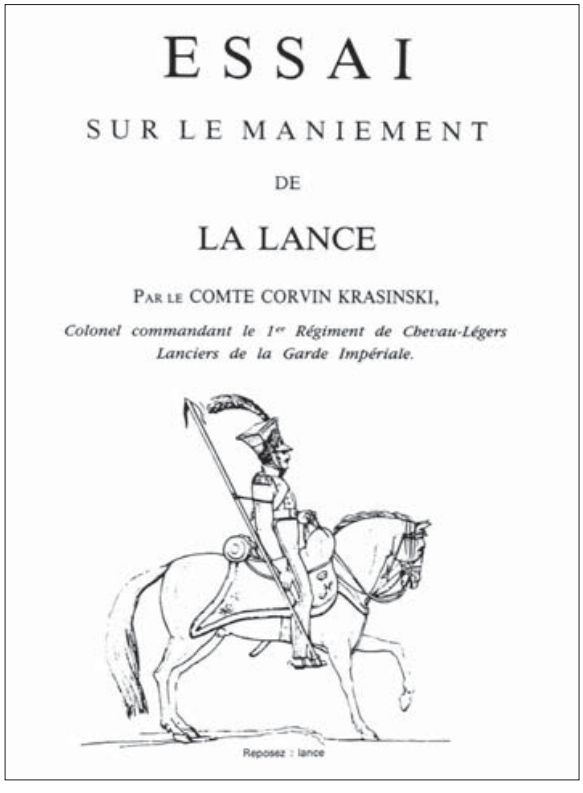
Next, each regiment of Guards of Honour also had to provide another 250 men to form the 1st Regiment of Scouts. They were to be sent to Paris, without their horses and carrying only arms and uniform. The 2nd Regiment was to be organized by employing 1,000 'postilions of the Empire' (i.e. the mounted drivers who rode the teams of government vehicles); and the 3rd Regiment would get the surplus of dismounted Poles from the 1st Light Horse Lancers of the Guard, plus some 800 Polish soldiers from the depots at Sedan – these men had to be *'de bonne volonté'*, and of long experience in the French service. All these men were to be directed towards Givet, where they would receive horses and uniforms; and Articles 6 and 7 dealt with the mounts. The colonels of the Imperial Guard Cavalry regiments were ordered to buy 300 horses for the Mounted Grenadiers, 450 for the Dragoons, 700 for the Mounted Chasseurs, 200 for the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers, and 1,000 for the 2nd (Dutch) Light Horse Lancers. Article 7 was simply a repeat of the decree of 4 December regarding the size, age and numbers of horses.

Front page of the *Essay on the Management of the Lance* written by Count Corvin Krasinski, Colonel of the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Imperial Guard. The Poles in French service were the only repository of detailed knowledge on this branch of the cavalry; Krasinski's manual was the standard work in the French army, and was also copied abroad.


ESSAI

SUR LE MANIEMENT

DE

LA LANCE

PAR LE COMTE CORVIN KRASINSKI,

Colonel commandant le 1er Régiment de Chevau-Légers Lanciers de la Garde Impériale.

Reposez : lance

Uniforms

The next five articles of the decree of 9 December 1813 covered clothing and wages. They stated that the 1st Regiment of Scouts was to be dressed like the Guards of Honour; the 2nd Regiment of Scouts, like Mounted Chasseurs of the Line; and the 3rd Regiment of Scouts, like Polish lancers of the Line. In practice, of course, it was not always possible for the regiments to provide the uniforms prescribed in the decree.

Most of the Grande Armée's reserve stockpiles of made-up clothing and materials had been left behind in the German cities that were under siege in 1813 and 1814. With tens of thousands of conscripts and veterans arriving in the different garrisons all over France, uniforms and equipment were soon found lacking; not enough materials were available, and there were neither sufficient workshops nor the skilled manpower to make them. More than once, all regiments were ordered to hand in any surplus of uniforms or equipment that they held to be distributed to other units.

Given that the regiments of Scouts only existed for a few months, it is not surprising that contemporary iconography is very rare; to confirm or contradict the broad descriptions in the decree, we have only the evidence of a few portraits, naif coloured drawings, letterheads and pieces of uniforms.

On 5 January 1814, Napoleon ordered the distribution of new uniforms for the Cavalry of the Guard. Of these, 500 uniforms were given to the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers, 500 to the 2nd (Dutch) Light Horse Lancers, 900 to the Scout regiments, 125 to the Mounted Artillery company, 500 to the four Foot Artillery companies, and 64 to the Sapper company. On 1 January the 1st Regiment of Scouts had neither cloaks nor breeches; and Squadron Leader Kozietulski, commanding the 3rd Scouts which

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he was organizing at Givet, was without farriers, trumpeters, pay – or sometimes, bread. Colonel Hoffmayer of the 2nd Regiment was obliged to appeal to the departments (local governments) to uniform his troops, and to the Lancers of Berg for their horses.

One thing upon which most existing reconstructions seem to agree is that all troopers – without exception of regiment, Old or Young Guard – carried lances with pennons. However, in fact only half of each Scout regiment was supposed to carry the lance, and none of them had pennons. Again, saddles were also different from those of most other French cavalry units. Only officers, and the 3rd Regiment, had shabraques; the others had some kind of very simplified leather-covered saddles with equally simplified harness.

Status

The question of seniority within the Imperial Guard hierarchy – which generally depended upon length of service – was complex. Within the 1st Regiment, troopers of the 1st, 2nd & 4th Companies – termed 'first scouts' – were considered to be members of the Old Guard; those of the 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Companies – 'second scouts' – were ranked as Young Guard. Officers, NCOs, trumpeters and trumpeter-apprentices of the 1st Regiment also ranked as Old Guard; these, and the 'first scouts', were paid the same rates as the Mounted Chasseurs of the Old Guard. Regimental staff officers of the 2nd and 3rd Regiments were also considered Old Guard. The other officers and the NCOs and troopers of the 2nd and 3rd Regiments ranked as in the Line, but received the pay of the Mounted Chasseurs of the Young Guard (also known as the 2nd Mounted Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard). Officers, NCOs and troopers who came from existing Old Guard units kept their rank and seniority.

Officer of the Scout-Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard – the *1er Eclaireurs* – in a contemporary drawing by one of his troopers. Illustrations of the 1st Regiment of Scouts suggest that the officers of the Old Guard units wore the pelisse exclusively. His tight-fitting campaign trousers are grey with a scarlet stripe on the outer seams. Note that the shabraque is plain, lacking either the eagle or crowned cypher 'N' – the shako plate is the Bourbon lily, dating this study to immediately after the First Restoration. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

Deployment

On 14 December 1813, Napoleon organized the Guard Cavalry into two divisions:

1st Division (Gen Lefebvre-Desnoëttes)
1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers
2nd (Dutch) Light Horse Lancers
Mounted Chasseurs of the Young Guard (last 10 sqns of the regiment of Mounted Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard).

This division was intended to serve in Belgium with the Army of the North, as Napoleon expected the Allied invasion from that direction.

2nd Division (Gen Guyot)
Mounted Chasseurs of the Old Guard (first 10 sqns of the regiment)
Dragoons, Young and Old Guard
Mounted Grenadiers, Young and Old Guard.

One mounted artillery battery was added to the 1st Division, and two batteries to the 2nd Division. This organization of the Cavalry of the Guard was to be maintained until the Scout regiments were ready to join the other units.

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One of the few contemporary drawings of Scouts of the Guard, showing men from the 1st Regiment shortly after Napoleon's first abdication – again, note that the black shakos bear a white cockade and a white *fleur de lys*, instead of the tricolour cockade and crowned eagle. At left is a trumpeter in a sky-blue pelisse. The officers wear green pelisses; at centre left and right are men of the Young Guard squadrons in green *habit-vestes*. All wear light grey overalls with a single scarlet stripe and extensive black leather reinforcement. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

On 26 December 1813, Napoleon ordered that the Cavalry of the Guard was to have three Old Guard regiments; their colonel-generals were ordered to find horses for all the dismounted troopers so that the cavalry would count 5,000 horses, *Gendarmes d'élite* included. Also, one squadron from each of the three regiments of Scouts had to be ready for service before 10 January 1814, forming with the other Guard Cavalry units a corps of 5,700 men. The two Polish lancer regiments of the Line then stationed at Sedan were also to join this corps, bringing it an additional 1,500 men. General Nansouty was appointed to command of this corps, effective as from 10 January 1814.

THE REGIMENTS

1st REGIMENT OF SCOUTS

This unit preferred the name of *Éclaireurs-grenadiers* (Scout-Grenadiers) to its official title of *1er Régiment d'Éclaireurs de la Garde Impériale.*

Officers

Even though it took its orders from Gen Guyot, the Colonel of the Mounted Grenadiers, its organization was entrusted to Col Claude Testot-Ferry, a former ADC to Marshal Marmont who now transferred from the Dragoons of the Imperial Guard. Squadron leaders in the regiment were: Pierre, a veteran of the 10th Mounted Chasseurs since 1792, now transferred from the Mounted Chasseurs of the Guard; Delavillane; Lepot, a former Mounted Grenadier of the Guard; and Kister (soon to be replaced by Capt de Waldner-Freundstein).

Most of the officer corps came from the Imperial Guard, mainly from the Mounted Grenadiers, Dragoons, 2nd Light Horse Lancers and Mounted Chasseurs; they were described by their colonel as being brave and experienced officers. Some other officers came from the 4th and 13th Mounted Chasseurs and the 3rd Hussars, while three sub-lieutenants came from the Light Horse Regiment of the King of Naples.

Rankers

As decreed, the four regiments of Guards of Honour were supposed to provide 250 men each to the 1st Regiment of Scouts. However, the 2nd Regiment of Guards of Honour, serving in the besieged city of Mainz, sent no troops at all, while the other three could only provide a third of the number required. As these men served 'with' the Imperial Guard instead of actually being members of it, and had special

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privileges as being the volunteer sons of the middle class and nobility, they were permitted to keep some of these (e.g. permission to have a servant for each two troopers). To fill the ranks, an appeal for volunteers was made to all the cavalry regiments of the Line, and the response allowed completion of the establishment of 53 officers and 1,005 other ranks, with 1,005 troop horses. By the end of the campaign, some three-quarters of the rankers had actually come from newly mustered conscripts.

Between the foundation of the regiment on 27 December 1813 and the beginning of March 1814, two separate muster rolls were used, one for the Old and the other for the Young Guard. The first muster roll contains 506 numbers for 501 soldiers who served as Old Guard (of whom 320 were 'first scouts'); of these, 337 came from the 1st, 3rd & 4th Regiments of Guards of Honour (one trooper was already wearing the cross of the Legion of Honour); 42 came from the Mounted Grenadiers (including four members of the Legion of Honour); three were former Mounted Chasseurs; one came from the Foot Grenadiers, and one from the 5th Regiment of Voltigeurs; seven Line troopers came from the 2nd, 3rd & 11th Cuirassiers; 25 from the 6th, 8th, 11th, 15th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 25th & 30th Dragoons; seven from the 3rd & 4th Lancers; four from the 2nd & 14th Mounted Chasseurs; one from the 6th Mounted Artillery; 35 from the Light Horse Regiment of the former King of Spain (of whom two were already members of the Legion of Honour); and finally, 25 trumpeters or trumpeter-apprentices came from the *Pupilles*.

The second muster roll contains 608 numbers for those who served in the Young Guard. Three troopers came from the Mounted Grenadiers of the Young Guard; 37 men from the 5th Dragoons (of which one had already served since 1793); there was one veteran of the Russian and 1813 campaigns, six were former gunners of the Coast Guard Artillery, and so forth. When we look at the age of the Young Guard personnel, we see that 185 were 18 years old, 67 were 29, eight were between 34 and 37, and one of the 608 was only 17 years old.

The regiment was organized fairly quickly, and most of the troopers arrived between early January and the end of February 1814. However, the regiment would never serve at full strength, but in detachments of unequal size. Overall, the selection of men for this Scout regiment must have given them a markedly varied appearance. The troopers coming from the Mounted Grenadiers of the Guard were at least 1.78m tall (5ft 10in), those from other units shorter, down to a minimum of 1.597m (less than 5ft 3in) for former Mounted Chasseurs of the Line. As for their horses, these measured between 13.5 hands and 13.8 hands to the withers (shoulder).

A contemporary drawing of a Scout of one of the five Young Guard companies of the 1st Regiment. In general it is convincing, apart from showing the red full-dress plume with campaign dress, and a large sheepskin saddle cover – the saddlery and harness were simplified for the Scouts. The uniform jacket is the dark green 'Kinski' or *habit-veste* with crimson facings; the shoulder strap is shown as solid red, although by regulation it was green with red piping. An interesting detail is the top band of the shako, shown as interlacing red rings. His campaign overalls are shown in exact detail. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

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Uniforms and equipment

The first one-and-a-half squadrons, formed from Guards of Honour and soldiers coming from the other Imperial Guard units and considered as Old Guard, were dressed in hussar-style uniforms based on those of the Guards of Honour: a dark green dolman and pelisse with white lace and cords. The other two-and-a-half squadrons, manned by conscripts, were Young Guard, and wore uniforms in the same style as the Mounted Chasseurs of the Line: the short dark green *habit-veste* or 'Kinski'.

One trooper from the 1st Guards of Honour, de Maudit, testified that while being incorporated into the 1st Regiment of Scouts he had to leave his dolman, belts, and sabretache at the regimental depot, and left for the army with only a coat and pelisse; his red shako was exchanged for a plain black one. (The quality of the Scouts' shakos was among the highest in the army. Lieutenant Zickel of the Mounted Chasseurs of the Young Guard, commissioned into the 1st Regiment of Scouts, received an advance of 2,500 francs to pay for his new uniform – for comparison, his monthly pay was 255 francs.)

Surviving documents in the archives at Vincennes tell us that the 1st Regiment received 272 pelisses, of which 46 were for NCOs; 19 were sky-blue for trumpeters, two of them with silver-and-green braid for corporal-trumpeters; and 205 were for 'first scouts'. Considering that one-and-a-half squadrons should have totalled 375 soldiers, this shows that the former Guards of Honour in the ranks must have continued to wear their former pelisses. Of 229 dolmans made and delivered, 213 were for troopers, and 12 for NCOs with mixed-colour braid. These were still at the depot after the end of the war; only four dolmans were issued, to NCOs serving at the depot. Of the Hungarian-style breeches, only 15 pairs for NCOs and six for troopers were made and delivered, but neither distributed nor worn.

Contemporary drawing of an officer of the 1st Regiment, instructing with the lance. He wears a green pelisse with black fur trim and silver lace and cords; a black pouch belt – note the attached pistol, just visible; and long, tight grey pantaloons with a single red stripe. His shako has silver furniture, but does not show a plume or pompon. Note how the chinchains are fixed to the upper rear hook, mounted on a star-shaped plate. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

For the Young Guard squadrons, 536 *habit-vestes* were made and issued. All the other items made for the 1st Regiment's four squadrons were distributed among them: 1,033 pairs of grey trousers, 1,044 scarlet waistcoats, 1,016 undress caps, 1,010 green portmanteaux (saddle valises), etc. Of 475 sabretaches that were delivered, 392 were used, and 82 were left in store at the depot as of 30 March 1814.

The regiment's armament consisted of 980 sabres, 448 lances, 448 pistols and 504 carbines; some of the manufacturers made low-quality items, or raised their prices at the last moment when the regiment could not refuse them. Since the 1813 reorganization of the army, lancer regiments were only partially armed with lances. The men in the first rank carried them, together with a sabre and a pistol; they were followed in the attack by the second rank armed with a carbine

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and a sabre only. This was to prevent accidental injury to the first rank by men in the second rank – the training in the tricky art of using lances was time-consuming. The lances used in the French army in 1814 were of the 1812 model.

* * *

The regiment was organized at the Military School in Paris, where the officers and NCOs worked to teach the newly arrived conscripts the basic skills of soldiering and horsemanship; more than once the stables were lit by candles so that they could even exercise at night. The first detachment, commanded by Capt Delaunay, left to join up with the army on 19 January 1814, after being presented to the Emperor during one of the many parades in front of the Tuileries palace. This detachment would form a brigade together with others from the 2nd and 3rd Regiments of Scouts until the rest of the 1st Regiment arrived. The last unit left Paris on 25 January.

The 1814 Campaign of France was perhaps the cruellest one for the inexperienced men among the troopers; and on 15 March 1814, after a number of battles and smaller engagements, the 1st Regiment of Scouts numbered only some 200 men.

Impression of a shako of the 2nd Scouts, showing clearly the leather reinforcement flap at the back, the ornate top band of interlocking rings, the tricolour cockade and a pompon. This shape of shako is almost the same as that worn by the *Chasseurs d'Afrique* in Algeria in the 1840s. (Pierre Louis Fergier; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

2nd REGIMENT OF SCOUTS

This unit used the more popular name of *Éclaireurs-dragons* (Scout-Dragoons) in preference to the official title of *2e Régiment d'Éclaireurs de la Garde Impériale*.

Officers

At first the regiment was commanded by ColMaj Leclerc, but a few days later he was promoted to general of brigade. On 17 December 1813 the Emperor replaced him by appointing the commander of the 2nd Dragoons of the Line, Col Hoffmayer.

Of the four squadron leaders in the regiment, Parizot and Lebrasseur both came from the Mounted Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard; Toussaint transferred from the 13th Mounted Chasseurs of the Line, and Bourbon-Busset arrived from the 27th Mounted Chasseurs. The squadron leaders and some other officers of the regiment were all ranked as Old Guard, the rest of the officer corps Young Guard. Two sub-lieutenants came from the Guards of Honour, and eight from the cavalry school at Saint-Germain.

Rankers

The 2nd Regiment of Scouts had more NCOs than the 1st Regiment, and more than one of these had already had a fine career in the Grande Armée.

The organization of the regiment was identical to the 1st, with four squadrons each of 250 men in two companies, not counting the officers. Napoleon's decree had stipulated that the men were to be found from among the *postillons de l'Empire*. This was a good idea, since such men were already experienced horsemen, and with the now sharply reduced borders of the empire most of these drivers were without employment. In the event, however, former postilions and couriers made up only a minority of the ranks, and most recruiting was from more or less the same sources as for the 1st Regiment, except that the 2nd did not receive members of the Guards of Honour.

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Again, the muster rolls survive in two volumes. The first starts on 15 December 1813 and ends on 23 January 1814, containing 1,200 numbers. Most of those mentioned in it came from the Dragoons of the Imperial Guard and the Light Horse Regiment of the former Spanish Royal Guard. Others came from the Mounted Chasseurs of the Old and Young Guard; from the 2nd, 5th & 20th Dragoons of the Line, the 3rd & 7th Lancers, and the *Gendarmes d'Espagne* – a lance-armed French gendarmerie that had been organized to fight the guerrillas along the lines of communication in Spain. Most of the trumpeters came from the Dragoons of the Guard, like *Brigadier-trompette* Jean Buhl, and were all Old Guard. The regimental depot was at Metz, and later on at Courbevoie.

The second volume of the muster roll contains the numbers from 1201 to 1311. All those mentioned came from the depot at Lille and many from the 5th Dragoons. One of them was a retired veteran who had served since 1793; now he replaced a conscript, and served as a Young Guard Scout.

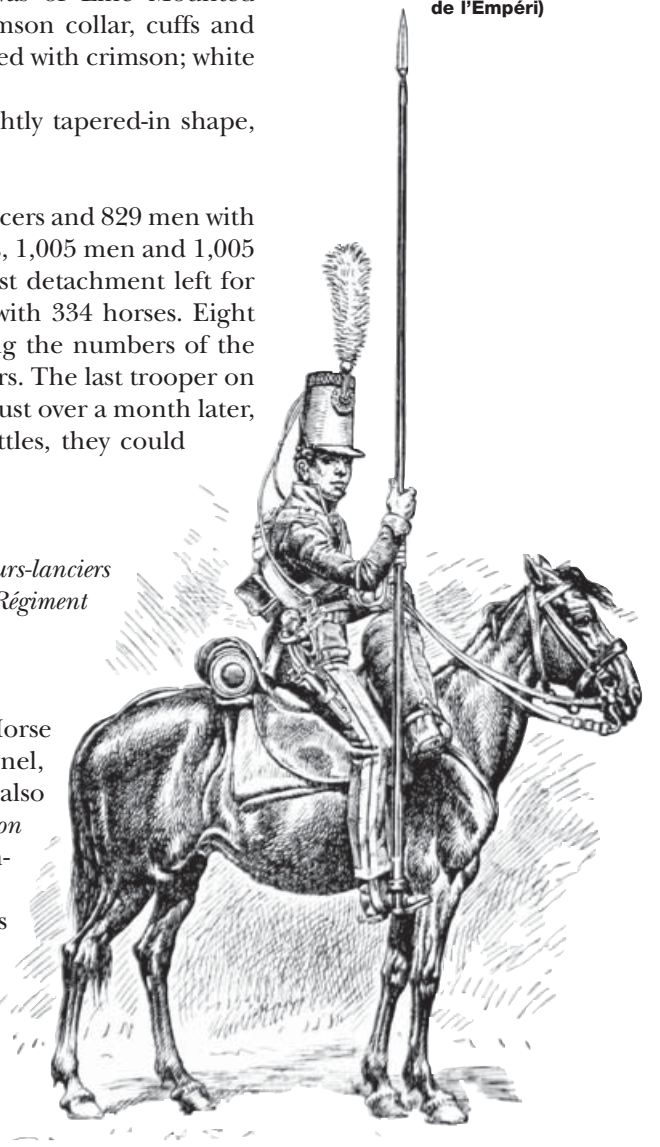
The prescribed **uniform** for the regiment was of Line Mounted Chasseurs style: a dark green *habit-veste* with crimson collar, cuffs and turnbacks, and pointed green shoulder straps piped with crimson; white metal buttons, and silver or white lace.

The shakos of the rankers were of a new, slightly tapered-in shape, and covered with crimson cloth.

* * *

On 19 January the 2nd Regiment mustered 28 officers and 829 men with 498 horses, against an establishment of 53 officers, 1,005 men and 1,005 troop horses. Five days later, on 24 January, a first detachment left for Châlons to join the army, numbering 313 men with 334 horses. Eight officers with 200 scouts left on 4 February, raising the numbers of the 2nd Regiment serving with the army to 502 rankers. The last trooper on the regimental roll arrived on 19 February 1814. Just over a month later, on 15 March, after several engagements and battles, they could muster only about 200 men.

Reconstruction of a lancer of the 2nd Regiment, his weapon marking him out as a front-rank man. His tall, rather tapered shako is secured by means of a pair of cap lines passing around his torso; and it is fitted with the tall full-dress plume, perhaps for a special inspection or parade. This drawing shows the modified saddle with blanket, portmanteau at the cantle and rolled cloak-coat at the pommel. His trousers show a double instead of the correct single scarlet stripe; Benigni drew this study before the contemporary pictures on pages 10 and 12 came to light. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)



3rd REGIMENT OF SCOUTS

This unit used the more popular name of *Éclaireurs-lanciers* (Scout-Lancers) rather than its official title, *3e Régiment d'Éclaireurs de la Garde Impériale.*

Officers

The unit was attached to the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Imperial Guard, and its Colonel, General of Division Count Vincent Krasinski, also became Colonel of the 3rd Scouts. *Chef d'escadron* Jean Kozietulski was commissioned as commanding major of the regiment.

Its officer corps included squadron leaders Szepticki, Skarzynski, Zaluski and Wasowicz. All officers of the regimental staff were Old Guard, while those of the companies were Young Guard, with the exception of those coming from the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers itself. We find 32 Old Guard officers and 22 of the Young

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Guard; ten sub-lieutenants were former *maréchaux des logis*, and six former *brigadiers* (sergeants and corporals respectively) from the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers. The regiment thus had a strong Polish character; however, there were seven French officers and two French surgeon-majors. All the others were Polish by birth, more than one of them with blue blood running through his veins.

Joseph Zaluski became a second lieutenant in the Polish Light Horse regiment of the Imperial Guard on 5 June 1807; he was promoted first lieutenant on 4 October 1808 and captain on 17 February 1811. As a *chef d'escadron*, he was commissioned with this rank into the 3rd Regiment of Scouts on 17 July 1813. He was taken prisoner at the battle of Brienne on 1 February 1814.

Rankers

When the decree of 9 December 1813 was signed, the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers consisted of 14 companies divided between two regiments: the first was Old Guard (1st–6th Cos); the second, Middle (7th–12th Cos) and Young Guard (13th & 14th Companies). At the time of the battle of Leipzig in October 1813 these latter mustered 273 troopers, including some 40 Lithuanian Tatars.

Napoleon decreed the reduction of the number of companies in the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers from 14 to eight, forming four squadrons. The excess were transferred to the 3rd Regiment of Scouts, together with some remaining Polish troopers of Line regiments stationed at Sedan; but the numbers still fell short of the establishment, and had to be made up with newly drafted conscripts. (There is one curious detail: nearly all the regimental farriers were German by birth.)

The 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard were originally posted to serve in Belgium, and only arrived with Napoleon's army in eastern France on 25 January 1814. The rolls tell us that the regiment then counted 28 officers and 595 men, plus 34 officers with 482 men still at the depot at Chantilly; the 3rd Regiment of Scouts had 12 officers with 24 men at Chantilly, and at the depot at Givet another 40 officers and 600 men, later to be transferred to Paris.

Between 1 January and 21 March 1814, the muster roll of the 3rd Regiment of Scouts lists 937 numbers; from number 598 onwards, one finds only Frenchmen who came from the depot of the Guard at Courbevoie, and from number 850 onwards, nothing but volunteers. The 14 trumpeters were all French.

On 8 March 1814 the 3rd Scouts numbered 66 officers and 794 men, of whom roughly 50 per cent were serving with the army and the rest in Paris. The 3rd Scouts and 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard served in the 1814 campaign as a single entity, resulting in some confusion in the records over the numbers and casualties properly attributable to the Scouts.

The 3rd Regiment wore **uniforms** similar to those of the Polish lancer regiments of the Guard and Line: the *czapska* lance cap, and the dark blue *kurtka* and trousers. Since the majority came from the reduced 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard, we may assume that crimson facings were the norm.[3]

3 For what it is worth, we may note that among the Polish Line lancer regiments at Sedan from which some personnel were also drafted in, four had officially worn the following differences: 2nd (red collar & cuffs piped white, dark blue lapels piped yellow, yellow trouser stripes); 3rd (crimson collar & cuffs piped white, dark blue lapels piped white, yellow stripes); 7th (yellow collar & cuffs piped red, dark blue lapels piped red, yellow stripes); and 8th (red collar & piping, yellow cuffs piped red, dark blue lapels piped red, red stripes).

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1814: THE CAMPAIGN OF FRANCE

While he played the diplomatic game in November 1813, Napoleon hoped and believed that the Allies would not be ready to cross into French territory until the spring. He calculated that he needed four months to rebuild his army, concentrate it, and lead it forward against the enemy. This prospect soon vanished, when news arrived that troops from the Austrian Gen Prince Schwarzenberg's multinational Army of Bohemia had crossed the Rhine on 21 December at Basle; and a week later, the Prussian Marshal Blücher sent the vanguard of his Army of Silesia across further north between Koblenz and Mannheim. In the far north, Prussians under Gen von Bülow with a small British force under Sir Thomas Graham marched into Holland. Suddenly, what had been foreseen as a spring/summer campaign became a winter campaign; and of the several hundreds of thousands of conscripts, recalled veterans and National Guardsmen that Napoleon had hoped for, only some 100,000 soldiers were more or less ready to fight in early January. Some of these were still at their respective regimental depots in the east and north of France, and faced days of winter marching before they could take their places within the Imperial Guard or Line regiments. To oppose the armies of the Coalition, from Switzerland to the Dutch coast, the Emperor had only about 85,000 tired and demoralized troops. They were commanded by marshals of whom some had already lost their belief in Napoleon's guiding genius, and with it their fighting spirit. In the years of victory they had been richly rewarded; now some of them were motivated by the wish to survive to enjoy those rewards – they dreamed of a peaceful life in their beautiful châteaux, amid estates unravaged by foreign invaders.

Soon they would be forced to retreat deep into France, leaving large regions in the hands of the Coalition. There was no time to waste; and the newly raised Scouts of the Guard would soon find themselves charged with dangerous and demanding duties. The campaign which followed would be a strange, unequal, but highly mobile one – in the course of just 65 days it would see the Emperor's *'palais'* moved no fewer than 48 times.

* * *

The day before his departure from Paris to join his army, the Emperor organized the defence of the capital. He named his brother Joseph as his 'lieutenant-general' or proxy at the head of the government, and appointed Gen Ornano, Colonel of the Dragoons of the Imperial Guard, as commander of the entire Imperial Guard in Paris. This force would soon include 2,250 Scouts: 750 from the 1st Regiment, 500 from the 2nd, and 1,000 of the 3rd. General Ornano also had to organize another 200 Mounted Grenadiers, 200 Dragoons, 300 Mounted Chasseurs and 300 Red Lancers, totalling another 1,000 men and bringing the Guard Cavalry in Paris to a strength of approximately 3,200.

1st Regiment of Scouts – Old Guard NCO with trumpeter. On campaign both men have black waterproof shako covers, and red pompons replacing the tall plumes. The trumpeter wears his sky-blue pelisse over a double-breasted scarlet waistcoat instead of the dolman, with the usual grey, red-striped overalls. The NCO is shown, perhaps unrealistically, in red full-dress breeches; the braid on these and on his pelisse is a mixture of dark green with silver. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

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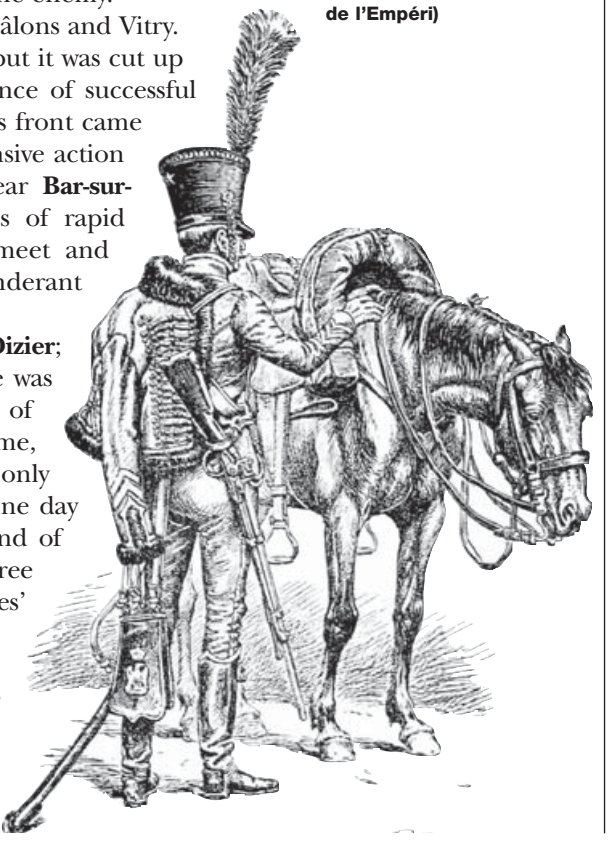
Even with conscripts overcrowding the different regimental depots, the Emperor at this stage could only muster some 63,000 men, including about 15,000 cavalry, to cover the eastern borders. Thinking that the Allies would penetrate into France from the north by following the axis Amsterdam–Antwerp–Brussels–Paris, he had concentrated large numbers of the Imperial Guard around Brussels, Antwerp and Breda. The Allies' crossings of the Rhine in Germany and Switzerland revealed the main threat to be from the east, and Napoleon soon recalled part of these elite troops to join his principal army.

Napoleon left Paris early on the morning of 25 January 1814, arriving that evening at Châlons. The first Scout units entered Châlons around the same time as the Emperor, riding against a stream of refugees fleeing towards Paris, from some of whom they learned of Napoleon's presence in the town – which still had an enormous effect on morale. During the campaign to come the Emperor would not be exaggerating greatly when he boasted that his presence alone was worth another 100,000 men – his personal reputation was so towering that Allied generals facing him would hesitate, haunted by fears of some unsuspected manoeuvre on their flanks or behind them.

Marching through the snow-covered fields, the officers and NCOs took every opportunity to instruct the conscript Scouts in the care of their horses, including such basics as how to saddle and pack them so as not to injure them. They continued to give instruction in the difficult techniques of using lance and sword, and the whole range of light cavalry scouting duties. Many of the Scouts were still in the process of becoming soldiers while actually marching towards the enemy.

The Emperor's army was concentrated around Châlons and Vitry. The open countryside favoured the Allied advance, but it was cut up by numerous rivers, whose bridges offered the chance of successful delaying actions at the least. The first combat on this front came on 24 January, when Marshal Mortier fought a defensive action against some 35,000 of Schwarzenberg's troops near **Bar-sur-Aube.** The Emperor determined to make a series of rapid marches without heavy supply trains, hoping to meet and destroy the Allied forces in detail before their preponderant numbers could be concentrated against him.

On 27 January, Napoleon marched towards **Saint Dizier**; there he met a Prussian force and, believing that he was dealing with Blücher's army, he ordered the cavalry of Gen Milhaud, followed by the infantry of Gen Duhesme, into the attack. Unfortunately, his opponents were only some 2,000 troopers of Gen Landskoï's vanguard. One day later, Gen Dautancourt received the overall command of the Scouts Brigade, composed of detachments of all three regiments, and serving within Gen Lefebvre-Desnoëttes' division. The rather complex organization of the light regiments of the Guard Cavalry requires some explanation. It should be remembered that the intended missions of the Scouts dictated their dispersal among the other regiments, which is confusing for the later reader but was beneficial for the Guard Cavalry commanders.



Brigadier **(corporal) of the Old Guard squadrons of the 1st Regiment in full dress – though after leaving Paris to join the army at the front in January 1814, they would have few opportunities to wear it. The resemblance in uniform style to the Guards of Honour is obvious. Inventories suggest that breeches were never issued to the 1st Scouts, but the troopers drafted in from the Guards of Honour reported to the depot in their old regimentals. His rank insignia are the two white chevrons above the cuffs of both his slung dark green pelisse and his dolman, which is green with scarlet cuff and collar facings. His Hungarian hussar-style breeches are red, and his boots have hussar-style tasselled trim; a sabretache completes his light cavalry outfit. The shako is fitted out with the full-dress plume, and note the star-shaped plate for the hook at the rear top, to secure his chinchains when not in use. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)**

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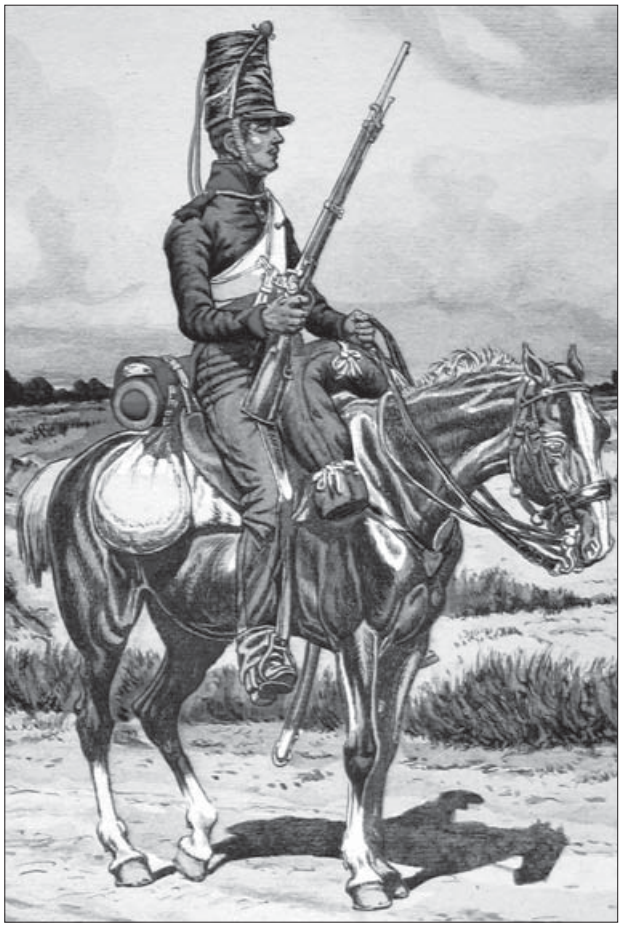

Trooper, 2nd Regiment, in campaign dress with carbine. Benigni's reconstruction clearly shows the taller shako worn by this regiment, secured with *aurore*-coloured cap lines, and again with a red pompon poking through the black oilskin cover. A simplified saddle was introduced to reduce the weight of the equipment – note the small size of this Scout's horse – but a feed bag still has to be carried on campaign. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes had left for Belgium on 13 December to take command of the Young Guard Cavalry division there. Recalled to Paris, he was ordered to leave for Châlons on 17 January, taking with him Gen Dautancourt, 600 men of the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers, 300 Mounted Chasseurs, 250 Dragoons, 200 Mounted Grenadiers, 300 men of the 3rd Regiment of Scouts, plus Gen Rottembourg's infantry division. On 19 January, Gen Dériot sent after him another detachment of 220 Polish lancers of the Line, 250 Dutch (Red) Lancers of the Guard, and 100 men from the 1st Regiment of Scouts, followed the next day by 300 horses. Arriving with the army, Lefebvre-Desnoëttes was ordered to march to Vitry, and at once organized his division into two brigades. General Dautancourt's brigade received the veteran squadrons and parts of the new Scouts detachments for his composite brigade; plus, under Gen Krasinski, the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers which Lefebvre-Desnoëttes had brought from Belgium, and the rest of the Scouts. General Colbert's brigade received the 220 Polish and 250 Red Lancers and the 100 men from the 1st Regiment of Scouts sent by Dériot from Paris, and 300 Scouts from the other two regiments.

On 28 January the Scouts encountered their first Cossacks, at some distance in front of the village of Montiérender, where the Russians were scouting ahead of the vanguard of the Army of Silesia; the Scouts charged the enemy with vigour, putting them to flight.

Brienne, 29 January

Napoleon decided to fight the Prussians first. Marching towards Troyes, he attacked Blücher's dispersed army at Brienne on Saturday 29 January. (This town held a personal interest for Napoleon; he had been to school there, receiving his very first instruction in the military arts and sciences.) Bringing some 30,000 – mainly conscript – troops into action against possibly 25,000 Prussians, he pinned the enemy with Grouchy's cavalry and horse artillery in the late morning. Then he sent Marshal Ney's two divisions and part of Victor's corps against the town, as the rest of his II Corps moved to outflank the Prussian right wing. The fighting was uneven and dragged on until 10pm; the French eventually gained possession of the town, and of the château from which Blücher had to depart in some haste – the old marshal and his chief-of-staff Gen Gneisenau are said to have jumped out of a window and ridden off to safety. Conversely, Napoleon was almost captured himself by Cossacks. The French suffered some 3,000 casualties and inflicted about 4,000. The Prussians withdrew to Arcis-sur-Aube and Bar-sur-Aube, looking for

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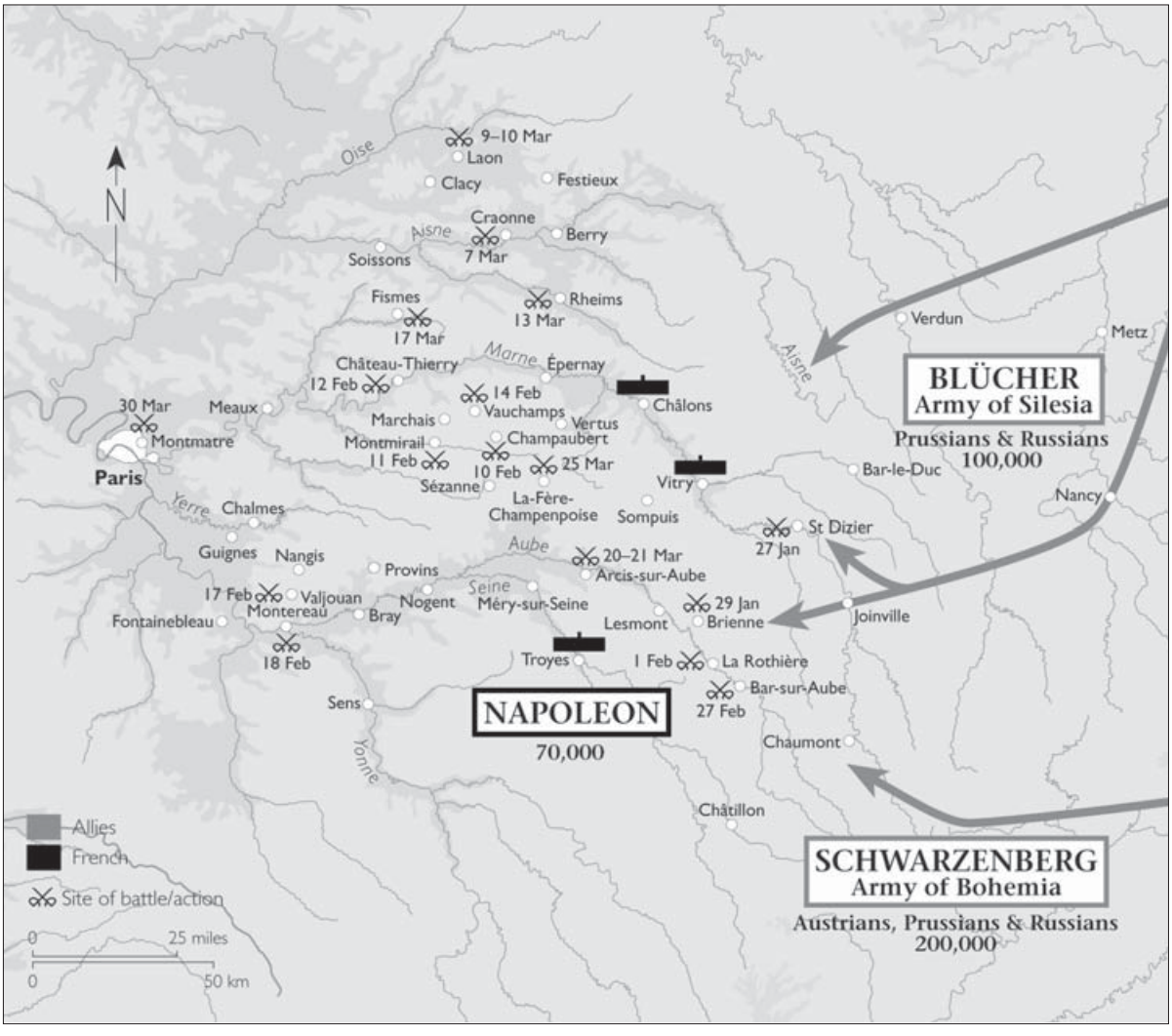

The major actions in Eastern France, 1814.

the support of the Austrians. In a letter of 31 January to Gen Clarke, Minister of War, the Emperor wrote:

> 'I had a rather hot affair [*une affaire fort chaude*] on the 29th at Brienne. I attacked the entire army of Marshal Blücher and Gen Sacken, with 30,000 infantry and a lot of cavalry. I attacked them with 10,000 men shortly after a long, hard march. I had the luck to be able to take the castle that dominates everything. Because the attack only started at 11pm, we had to fight the whole night. Blücher was beaten, and we took 500 to 600 prisoners and killed or wounded 3,000 to 4,000. Blücher was forced to recall all his troops marching towards Paris to retreat to Bar-sur-Aube. Yesterday I pursued him in the same direction for some 2 miles, bombarding him with about 40 guns. Our losses are estimated to be 2,000 men. Generals Forestier and Baste of the Young Guard are killed. General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, who commanded the cavalry of the Guard, has been wounded by a bayonet thrust while charging with his usual fearlessness. General Decous of the Young Guard is wounded.'

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That Saturday the Scouts of the Guard had received their true baptism of fire near the village of Perthes, close to Brienne. Fighting at odds of one against three, but buoyed up by the Emperor's presence, they took only a few casualties; in the 1st Scouts one of them was Capt Drion, who was wounded.

On 30 January, Gen Guyot took over the command of the division from the wounded Lefebvre-Desnoëttes.

An officer of the 2nd Scouts, in the dark green regimental Kinski and trousers. As an officer he has more elaborate cap lines ending in 'flounders' caught up under an epaulette. Unlike his men he also has a dark green shabraque, edged with silver braid and red piping and embroidered with motifs of the imperial crown and crowned eagle in the corners. Just visible here is the edge of a small saddle cover of spotted imitation pantherskin placed over the seat of the saddle – see Plate E3. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

La Rothière, 1 February

Brienne would be the start of a campaign that more than one military historian has judged to be among the most impressive ever fought by Napoleon. With a relative handful of troops and little matériel, he faced the Allies in terrible winter conditions. Ammunition was low, and there were shortages of every kind of equipment; many soldiers were scarcely clothed, and certainly not according to the regulations. But inexperienced as most of them were, they did wonders, at the cost of severe casualties. (It is remarkable to note that on the day of Brienne, 29 January, Allied diplomats in conference at Châtillon-sur-Seine sent Napoleon yet another offer of terms which would have permitted him to keep his throne – they were still nervous of confronting him.)

The French pursued Blücher south to La Rothière, soon to be the scene of a second and more serious battle. At 1pm on 1 February, Blücher turned on the French and launched a counter-attack with 52,000 troops, secure in the knowledge that there were another 63,000 Allies in the general vicinity, and that Gen Wrede was coming up behind the French left flank with 20,000 of these. Napoleon, with 54,000 men, planned to withdraw and avoid action, but the Prussian general forced a battle which raged for several hours. In this bitter engagement the lack of training of many conscripts told against the French, but they held most of their ground until 5pm, when rising winds and snow flurries brought the fighting to an end and saved them from a worse defeat. Next day the French army retreated towards Brienne and Troyes; they had left 4,000 dead and wounded on the freezing battlefield, plus 2,000 prisoners and 60 guns.

At La Rothière the Scouts Brigade, commanded by Gen Dautancourt, was ordered by Gen Nansouty to charge the enemy. The young *éclaireurs* rode off with shouts of *'Vive l'Empereur!'*, one part against some enemy cavalry and the others – the 1st Regiment detachment with their colonel at their head – charging Russian infantry who were advancing to support their cavalry. Charging in a snowstorm, the inexperienced troopers – holding their lances with both hands, since they had not yet learned how to control them properly with one hand – were unable to

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drive the Russians back, but their élan was such that they stopped the advance. Rallying out of range of the enemy's fire, the Scouts soon charged a second time but, outnumbered, they suffered heavy casualties. One of these was Squadron Leader Zaluski of the 3rd Regiment, who was taken prisoner. Another was Lt d'Hardivillier of the 2nd – a brother-in-law of Gen Dautancourt – who was standing near the general when he was cut in two by a cannonball.

Champaubert, 10 February

After their victory at La Rothière, many in the two Allied armies considered the campaign as good as over, and judged that they had only to march towards Paris in order to dictate peace. Napoleon thought differently: for him the campaign had only just started, and a succession of small checks slowed Schwarzenberg's advance down the Seine to a cautious crawl.

Two days after La Rothière, on 3 February, while marching through the snow-covered landscape towards Troyes, the Guard Cavalry met up with their comrades from the Old Guard who had been serving with Marshal Mortier on the Meuse front. With the exception of the Young Guard squadrons serving with Gen Maison and Gen Carnot in Belgium, the Cavalry of the Guard was again united. Nevertheless, the heyday of large regiments mustering at least 1,000 sabres lived on only in the veterans' memories.

On 7 February, after crossing the River Seine at the bridge of Nogent in pouring rain, the Scouts Brigade was dissolved, and each detachment returned to the Old Guard regiment to which it was affiliated. The 3rd Scouts now received a reinforcement of two squadrons commanded by Squadron Leader Skarzynski. The next day, the rest of Marshal Mortier's corps joined Napoleon's main army. That day Napoleon was considering the latest Allied peace terms, and weighing his options.

Co-operation between the two Allied armies was nearly non-existent. The ever-headstrong Marshal Blücher still had his eyes fixed on Paris, where there was widespread panic. Marching westwards towards the weakly defended capital along muddy roads to the south of the River Marne, in melting slush and heavy rain that bogged down the artillery and wagons and hampered communications, Blücher's army had become considerably strung out. While Mortier struck out from Troyes into Schwarzenberg's right flank, sending him back to Bar-sur-Aube, Napoleon decided to seize this opportunity to protect Paris by attacking the Army of Silesia.

Marching northwards from Nogent-sur-Seine on 9 February through heavy rain, at the head of 30,000 tired and hungry troops with 120 cannon, the Emperor surprised the 5,000 Russians of Gen Olssufiev near the village of Baye, south of Champaubert. The French forces engaged were the corps of Marshals Marmont and Ney, and for once in this campaign they enjoyed a massive

Officer, trumpeter and men of the 3rd Scouts in *tenue de campagne*; all have the crimson plastrons of their *kurtka* jackets buttoned across to show the blue side only. The officer wears a red leather waterproof cover around his richly decorated pouch belt. His blue trousers are very wide, with a crimson stripe edged in silver, and end in fixed 'false boots' of black reinforcing leather – see Plate F/G. The rear corners of his shabraque are hooked up to protect them from mud and wear. His *czapka* has a light brown waterproof cover, those of his troopers, black; all wear white pompons. It was these troops who formed the majority of the ten small squadrons of the Guard Cavalry that served in the defence of Paris in April 1814. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

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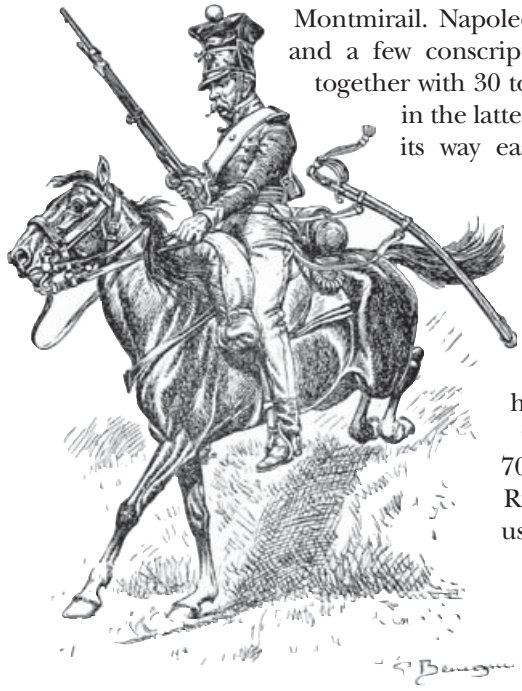
The Russian LtGen Count Olssufiev (1775–1817), commander of the 6,000-strong IX Corps of Blücher's Army of Silesia. On 10 February 1914 his corps was destroyed at the battle of Champaubert. Captured with the rest of his officers and staff, Olssufiev was brought before Napoleon, who invited his prisoner to dine with him.

Rear-rank trooper of the 3rd Scouts in campaign dress, armed with a carbine. His campaign overalls lack the usual scarlet stripe. Benigni draws him with fringeless *contre-epaulettes*, and the same dark blue-and-white striped lancer girdle as Line units of Polish lancers. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)



superiority of force – as much as six to one. By 10am the next morning Gen Olssufiev's pickets were being driven in, but their commander rashly decided to fight it out in the belief that Blücher might come to his aid. This proved a vain hope, and by 3pm on the afternoon of 10 February the Russians had been pressed back through Champaubert. Olssufiev tried to retreat toward Etoges, but found himself enveloped by French cavalry on both flanks. His force lost some 2,400 killed and wounded, the French only some 200 men; Olssufiev himself, two other generals, 47 other officers and more than 1,800 men were taken prisoner, and some 20 guns were lost. In his daily letter to his brother Joseph in Paris, Napoleon wrote:

> 'Dear Brother, today I have attacked the enemy at Champaubert… General-in-chief Olsoufief [sic] is taken prisoner with all his generals, all the colonels, officers, guns, wagons and baggage...'

At Champaubert, the officer who had recently arrived with reinforcements, Squadron Leader Skarzynski, led the sole Scout squadron with the army that day in a charge against the corps of Gen Olssufiev, assisting in its destruction and the capture of the Russian commander and his staff.

Montmirail, 11 February

Champaubert was only a minor victory, but one with serious consequences for the Allies, since the Emperor had now cut the Army of Silesia in two. This success proved to be the prelude for two more French victories over the next few days, at Montmirail and Vauchamps.

Without taking any time to rest his men, Napoleon marched west from Champaubert along the north bank of Le Petit Morin at the head of his small but determined army, to confront the dispersed corps of Gen Sacken, with 19,000 Russians, and Gen Yorck, with 12,000 Prussians. On 11 February, after a night of snowfall mixed with rain which reduced the fields to a sea of mud, the 14,500 French troops marched through Montmirail. Napoleon's force consisted basically of the Old Guard and a few conscripts – the 'Marie-Louises' – under Gen Ricard, together with 30 to 36 guns. Finding the enemy, the Emperor sent in the latter against Sacken's corps, which was trying to fight its way eastwards to Montmirail, while deploying other troops to watch for Yorck's expected arrival from the north. Yorck was slow in appearing, however, and the arrival of Mortier's corps by 4pm that afternoon raised Napoleon's strength to 20,000. Now he could switch to the offensive.

Ordering the general advance, Marshal Ney dismounted and placed himself at the head of the columns of Gen Friant's division of the Old Guard – 4,000 veterans supported by 700 cavalry. They marched towards the 7,000 Russians, determined to beat them simply by using their bayonets. During the attack the Empress' Dragoons of the Imperial Guard, together with the squadrons of the 1st and 2nd Scouts commanded by Col Testot-Ferry, overran a massive Russian infantry

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square consisting of eight battalions. In his letter to Joseph that night the Emperor claimed to have won a decisive battle, and that the Army of Silesia had ceased to exist; he had taken all the enemy's artillery, wagons and baggage together with thousands of prisoners, and all this while committing only half of his Old Guard – 'My Foot Guard, my Dragoons, my Mounted Grenadiers have done miracles'.

While this was overstating the case, Sacken's Russians had indeed been badly beaten, while Yorck's Prussians were held off by Marshal Mortier. At the end of the battle the enemy left six regimental banners, 13 guns and thousands of casualties and prisoners in the hands of the French, who had suffered only 2,000 casualties (a figure that Napoleon – a habitually unreliable source – reduced to 'no more than 1,000' in his letter). Now they turned their horses towards the corps of Gen Yorck, and the remains of Gen Sacken's corps who were fleeing towards Château-Thierry.

The next day, by means of a clever flank movement by the troops of Marshal Ney, the Guard Cavalry of Gen Nansouty and the Guard of Honour regiments of Gen Defrance ran down the enemy near **Château-Thierry**. Friend and foe entered the town at the same time, and in a terrible mêlée seven Allied infantry battalions and a large number of guns were overrun by the French. For some inexplicable reason Blücher remained inactive while his lieutenants were slaughtered.

New information forced the Emperor to leave Château-Thierry at 3am on the night of 13/14 February: an Allied force had driven Marmont out of Etoges. Calculating that the commander must be Gen Wittgenstein, Napoleon realized that Blücher had to be short of troops under his immediate command, and accordingly marched eastwards, leaving Marshal Mortier to pursue the beaten enemy away to the north.

Aloïse Gadon became a second lieutenant on 11 April 1813, and was commissioned with this rank into the 3rd Regiment of Scouts on 22 January 1814. This dandyish young officer wears the Polish dark blue lancer uniform, with officers' zigzag silver lace around the crimson collar and lapels. The broad waist belt shows a plate with a large imperial eagle. Note the Imperial Guard aiguillettes and, on his breast, the insignia of a Knight of the Imperial Order of the Reunion, of which Napoleon distributed many in the late stages of the Empire.

Vauchamps, 14 February

The Emperor marched overnight at the head of the Guard and Grouchy's cavalry, covering about 16 miles to join Marshal Marmont's corps and bring the French strength in the area of Vauchamps to 25,000. Early that day, Blücher was advancing south-westwards in the direction of Montmirail when he encountered strong French outposts near Vauchamps. With only 20,000 men to hand, commanded by Gens Kleist, Kapzevitch and Ziethen, the aged field marshal soon found his cavalry driven from the field, and then discovered from a prisoner that Napoleon was approaching in person. The mention of this name was enough to persuade him to order a retreat; the Prussians and Russians withdrew in good order, harassed by the French cavalry, which periodically got ahead of the Allied columns. Fortunately for Blücher, the wet ground hindered the deployment of the French guns and infantry, and he slipped away through Etoges.

Napoleon halted the pursuit beyond that town, and granted his exhausted men a short rest. The engagement had cost the French some

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3rd Scouts trooper getting directions from a peasant – the 1814 campaign saw many forced marches along minor roads and lanes across the featureless plains of eastern France. This drawing shows the pistol clipped and strapped to the carbine sling, part of the doubled belt that also supported the cartridge pouch. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

600 casualties; Blücher's losses were 7,000 men, 16 guns, and a large amount of transport. The Emperor had now spread desperate confusion in the ranks of the Army of Silesia, which was forced to flee – back down the road up which they had marched a day earlier, confidently asking the peasants the way to Paris. However, although so close to achieving the destruction of the combined Prussian–Russian army under Blücher, the Emperor was now forced to turn his attention towards the Austrian Gen Schwarzenberg and his Army of Bohemia to the south.

When they crossed the French borders the Allied commanders had expected to meet little resistance from a weak, defeated and dejected French army. But Napoleon – the Emperor who had directed campaigns by armies of over half-a-million soldiers, on battlefields stretching deep into Russia or from the Austrian border to Hamburg – now had only tens of thousands of men at his command, and this seems to have made him feel like a young general again. The last time he had showed a similar energy, inspiration and grasp of tactics may have been as long ago as his early Italian campaigns. In those days he was the 'inventor' of fast-marching armies, taking his dispersed enemies by surprise with lethal effect, and now he was doing it again. Using secondary roads, he avoided the main highways which the Allies were clogging by their sheer numbers. Guided by local peasants, he even moved his forces through marshland in order to surprise the Allies, who had not yet learned their lessons. Fighting for four consecutive days against more powerful, well-equipped armies, the French had still succeeded in beating them into retreat and inflicting some 20,000 casualties.

Most of the credit should go to the Cavalry of the Guard led by Gens Letort and Laferrière-Lévèque. (Among the casualties suffered by the Scouts were Squadron Leader Skarzynski and Capt Zielonga of the 3rd Regiment, both of whom were wounded.) Despite these successes, however, the shortage of manpower in the Guard Cavalry was steadily getting worse. On 15 February – the date by which all three Scout regiments were supposed to be fully equipped and manned – Gen Colbert's 1st Guard Cavalry Division (for example) mustered only:

Polish lancers of the Line: 6 officers, 149 men
2nd Regiment of Scouts: 12 officers, 241 men
2nd (Dutch) Light Horse Lancers: 15 officers, 247 men
Mounted Chasseurs & Mamelukes: 25 officers, 297 men

The total for the whole division was thus just 58 officers and 934 men – the establishment of a single regiment. As the campaign went on, conscripts still flooded into the depots, where veterans coming from other fronts tried to teach these raw boys the trade of a soldier in a few hurried weeks. During the operations against Schwarzenberg the Cavalry of the Guard was strengthened by the arrival of experienced, combat-hardened Dragoons and *Gendarmes d'Espagne*, but losses were

(continued on page 33)

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1st REGIMENT (SCOUT-GRENADIERS)

1: Col Testot-Ferry, campaign dress

2: Officer, undress uniform

3: Officer in pelisse

A

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1st REGIMENT (SCOUT-GRENADIERS)

1: Trooper, Old Guard company, full dress

2: Trooper, Old Guard company, campaign dress

3: NCO, Old Guard company, campaign dress

B

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1st REGIMENT (SCOUT-GRENADIERS)

1: Trooper, Young Guard company, campaign dress

2: Trooper, Young Guard company, full dress

3: Trumpeter, campaign dress

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2nd REGIMENT (SCOUT-DRAGOONS)

1 & 2: Troopers, campaign dress

3: Trumpeter

D

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2nd REGIMENT (SCOUT-DRAGOONS)

1: Trumpet-major
2: Trumpeter
3: Officer, full dress

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F

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G

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so high that the numbers in the ranks never really rose; for instance, the Red Lancers had already lost 139 men and 174 horses killed or wounded.

* * *

Soon after his successes against the Army of Silesia at Champaubert, Montmirail and Vauchamps, Napoleon hastened back to the River Seine to confront Schwarzenberg's Army of Bohemia, which was moving westwards towards Paris along the River Yerre. Some French units marched 60 miles in under two days to check Schwarzenberg's vanguard at **Mormant (Valjouan)** on 17 February. There the French encountered the advanced troops of Gen Wittgenstein's VI Corps, under the command of Gen Pahlen; Napoleon launched a sharp attack, taking some 2,000 prisoners and 11 guns and inflicting another 2,000 casualties. Marshal Victor was slow in appearing before the town, and the Allies slipped away over the Seine; Victor was at once replaced at the head of his corps by Gen Gérard. Nevertheless, after this setback Schwarzenberg thought it wiser to stop his advance on Paris and to fall back towards Troyes.

Montereau, 18 February

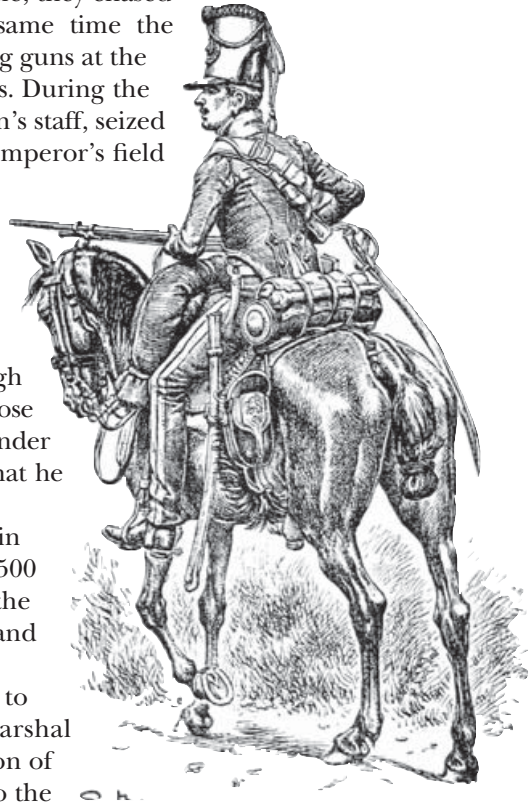
The Prince of Württemberg was left to cover the withdrawal at Montereau, at the confluence of the rivers Seine and Yonne, where he took up positions from which he could either retreat in good order or stand a French attack. The French massed guns silenced the Austrian batteries, and a devastating attack was thrown at the town in order to capture both key bridges. Again the Emperor's main shock force was his Guard Cavalry; aided by Gen Pajol's regiments of the Line, they chased the enemy over the bridges into the town. At the same time the inhabitants came to their assistance, sniping with hunting guns at the Allied troops trying to escape through the narrow streets. During the fight Marshal Lefebvre, aged 59, at the head of Napoleon's staff, seized the vital bridge. Captain Coignet, wagonmaster of the Emperor's field headquarters, describes the scene in his memoirs:

> 'As we rode over the bridge, a large gap in it was no obstacle to us, on account of the speed with which we came. Our horses flew!… At the end of the bridge, which is long, there is a street to the left. This faubourg being blocked up with the wagons belonging to the [enemy] rearguard, we had to fight our way through with our sabres. We swept everything before us. Those who escaped our fury did so by dragging themselves under the wagons. Our marshal [Lefebvre] fought so hard that he foamed at the mouth.'

The Allies lost 3,000 killed and wounded, as many again taken prisoner, and 15 guns; the French lost some 2,500 men. Napoleon was disappointed with the scale of the success, but the Army of Bohemia had been repulsed, and was heading back towards Troyes in some disarray.

The day after the battle of Montereau it was time to reward the soldiers, and Napoleon wrote to Marshal Kellermann that he would grant 500 crosses of the Legion of Honour to the three cavalry divisions of the Guard, 50 to the

Another useful Benigni study of the rear view of a campaigning trooper and his horse, this time of the 2nd Regiment; note the false pockets in the jacket skirts. The method of packing and placing the portmanteau behind the saddle is also rendered carefully. This young man carries a Russian cuirassier's helmet as a trophy, slung from the nearside of his saddle behind his sabre scabbard. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)



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Guard artillery, 300 to Gen Friant's division, and 200 crosses to the Old Guard division serving with Marshal Mortier.

With each letter to his brother Joseph or to the Minister of War the Emperor asked for more troops. These men were theoretically available; but regimental depots sometimes had large numbers of horses but practically no troops, or vice versa. During the whole campaign, columns of troops marched off from their depots or from Paris to join the army, like the 600 French officers who returned from the service of the King of Naples, and were now placed with the Young Guard.

* * *

The destruction of many bridges was now a factor in limiting Napoleon's manoeuvres, preventing him from leading his 74,000-strong army in pursuit of Schwarzenberg to bring on a decisive engagement near Troyes. The Allied councils of war – whose political wrangling, particularly between Russia and Austria, was a constant hindrance to their field commanders – decided that the Army of Bohemia should fall back for several days while the emphasis was placed on Blücher's operations further north. The Prussian marshal was concentrating his forces around Méry-sur-Seine, and on 24 February he renewed his advance towards Paris, while Napoleon was still frustrated by his lack of an adequate bridging train. Blücher's aim was to cross the Aisne near Soissons, and to link his forces with those of Bülow and Winzingerode from the Low Countries. On 25 February the French finally reached Troyes by a roundabout march, but Schwarzenburg had fallen back towards Bar-sur-Aube.

While a co-ordinated advance on Paris was the obvious strategy for the Allies, and was eagerly argued by Blücher, neither the Russians nor the Austrians were anxious to take responsibility for confronting Napoleon. Their many past defeats at his hands were still vivid memories, and neither wished to become a scapegoat for any Allied failure. Napoleon was still pursuing diplomatic manoeuvres in an attempt to weaken the solidarity of the Coalition. He wrote to his father-in-law, the Emperor Francis of Austria, and offered to conclude a peace treaty with Austria on

A spirited drawing of a vedette of the 1st Scouts chasing an enemy patrol. In the 1814 winter campaign the troopers of the Old Guard companies would have been grateful for their hussar-style uniform, and would normally have worn their pelisses like jackets. Light cavalry was any general's indispensable eyes and ears, and his dire shortage of that arm of service bedevilled Napoleon throughout his 1813 and 1814 campaigns. Apart from the lack of skilled men, his army never really made up the loss of hundreds of thousands of horses in Russia in 1812. (Pierre Benigni, former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

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the basis of the original proposals that he should retreat behind France's natural borders, but with the exception that he should keep Belgium and the port of Antwerp. Meanwhile he pursued his military strategy in parallel, still believing that by gaining further victories he would be able to dictate his own terms. His self-confidence, based on his many past triumphs over the other Continental powers, remained extraordinary.

Impression of lancers of the Young Guard companies of the 1st Scouts in a winter mêlée. There is more than one description of hastily-trained conscripts wielding their lances in both hands like agricultural implements. (Pierre Louis Fergier; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

This attractive painting of a 2nd Scouts front–rank man is incorrect in several respects – early artists simply lacked a good selection of contemporary prints to copy, given the short existence of these few regiments. The Scouts never displayed pennons on their lances; the 2nd Scouts never had button-on green campaign overalls; and enlisted men only used shabraques in the 3rd Regiment. (Anne S.K.Brown Library)

At the beginning of March, Napoleon, with 47,000 mostly conscript troops, marched northwards after Blücher, who became trapped between the French army, the French-held city of Soissons and the River Aisne. However, the military commander of Soissons surrendered to the Prussians and opened the gates to them, allowing Blücher to cross the Aisne. He was now able to link up with Bülow's and Winzingerode's forces, concentrating a total of about 100,000 men around Laon; meanwhile, further south, Schwarzenberg was on the move again – on 27 February he had beaten Marshal Macdonald at Bar-sur-Aube.

The character of the campaign was becoming clear. Napoleon's greatly outnumbered army held a central position between the two prongs of the Allied advance westwards towards the capital. Each time the Emperor gained a success and pushed back one of the Allied armies, the other took the opportunity to march closer to Paris. The northern thrust by Blücher's Army of Silesia, down the valley of the Marne, had been deflected northwards over the Aisne; but now Napoleon had to switch his attention southwards again, to counter Schwarzenberg's Russo-Austrian Army of Bohemia pushing westwards down the Aube and Seine.

During these manoeuvres actions were fought at places such as Le Chemin des Dames, Corbény, la vallée Foulon, Vauclerc, Heurtebise and l'Ailette – some of which names would become all too bloodily familiar once again a hundred years later. The Scouts took an active part in these weeks of pursuit, march and counter-march; they saw action at Courteranges, Callibordes, Canroy, Rebais, and in particular at Rocourt and Courcelle. Most often they found themselves fighting against the Cossacks who formed the rearguard of the Army of Silesia. Although they never achieved their true regimental strengths, their casualties were made up periodically by the arrival of reinforcements. At the end of February, eight new squadrons of Imperial Guard Cavalry caught up with the army. These consisted of the 4th Sqn of the 1st Scouts, some 220 men; 100 from the 2nd Scouts; 200 from the 3rd Scouts; 100 from the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers; 106 from the 2nd (Dutch) Light Horse Lancers; 150 from the Mounted Chasseurs; 100 from the Mounted Grenadiers; and 50 *Gendarmes d'élite.*

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Berry-au-Bac, 6 March

On the morning of 5 March at Fismes, after getting news of the disastrous capitulation of Soissons, Napoleon ordered Gen Nansouty to send his cavalry with all haste towards Berry-au-Bac in order to capture the bridge there; this was the next major crossing up-river from that at Soissons, and it was very important to capture it intact. (In the meantime, Gen Corbineau, with the support of Gen Laferrière-Lévèque's Scouts, took Rheims; among some thousand prisoners of war taken from Winzingerode's corps was the Russian Prince Gagarin.) At Berry-au-Bac, Gen Nansouty, reinforced by Gen Pac's Polish lancers of the Line, arrived to find the bridge defended by a brigade of Cossacks.

A furious charge bundled the enemy back before they could mount an effective defence, and the bridge was taken. The Polish *Chef d'escadron* Skarzynski of the 3rd Scouts performed prodigies of valour on this occasion; snatching a lance from a Cossack, he created an empty space around himself. He was soon imitated by his fellow officers, and the enemy were put to flight, hotly pursued by Nansouty's cavalry for more than two miles. The pursuers noticed that none of the Cossacks looked backwards as they rode; this was a sign that cavalrymen could read all too well – it meant that the fugitives had nothing on their minds but escape from certain death or capture. The Emperor observed this action in person, and in recognition of his bravery and leadership he created Skarzynski a baron of the Empire; in his coat of arms one finds a bridge, in reference to the feat that won him his barony.

Up until now the casualties in the Scout regiments had been modest, but this would soon change.

Ambrosius Skarzynski of the 3rd Scouts commanded the Emperor's duty squadron when they charged the bridge at Berry-au-Bac, dispersing a Russian cavalry force 2,000 strong and capturing Prince Gagarin and two guns. It was during this fight that Skarzynski took a Cossack's lance away from him and used it to fight his way through the enemy formation.

Craonne, 7 March

Napoleon now advanced towards Laon, and on 6 March he settled down for the night at the Hôtel de l'Ecu de France in Corbény. The postmaster of Berry-au-Bac informed the Emperor that at nearby Beaurieux there lived an old artillery officer who knew the region well. When the Emperor summoned this veteran, named de Bussy, he was surprised to recognize him – he was an old schoolfellow from Brienne, who had also served in the same regiment with Napoleon at La Fère. Following the advice of his old comrade, the Emperor changed his instructions for the route of march; he made de Bussy an ADC, and entrusted him with guiding the advance force.

If the French were to reach Laon, where Blücher was concentrating his forces, they first had to take the heights of Craonne, defended by the rearguard of the Army of Silesia, the Russian corps of Gens Sacken and Woronzoff. From that position, Blücher had planned to launch an enveloping attack with Winzingerode's corps and 11,000 cavalry; but before these plans could mature, Napoleon pounced on Craonne, marching with just 37,000 men from the direction of Berry. He tried to fix the Allies' attention by a frontal attack while Ney outflanked them

OPPOSITE **At Craonne, Col Testot-Ferry of the 1st Scouts charged at the head of his squadrons through the enemy's infantry squares towards their artillery; when a cannonball killed his horse he took that of an officer killed next to him and continued to lead the charge, losing this second horse while overrunning the Russian guns. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)**

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Battle of Berry-au-Bac, March 1814: Gen Nansouty's Cavalry of the Imperial Guard and the Polish lancers of Gen Pac take the vital bridge. (After Philippoteaux; author's collection)

from the north with strong cavalry forces, but the timing went awry. Supported by the cavalry of Gen Nansouty, Ney sent his infantry into the attack too early, and was badly mauled by the Allied artillery; so Nansouty launched his troopers to take the guns.

Colonel Testot-Ferry led his squadrons of the 1st Regiment of Scouts through the Allied infantry squares towards the artillery. A cannonball hit his horse, killing it instantly, and passed on to hit *Chef d'escadron* Kister next to him, who fell dead from his saddle. The colonel jumped on Kister's horse and continued to lead the charge, overrunning an enemy battery; but the enemy mounted a counter-charge, which drove back the Guard Cavalry and struck into Ney's infantry columns. Helped by Gen Grouchy's cavalry and the fire of the Guard artillery, the Guard Cavalry were able to regroup. Craonne was taken, but the price was high. The Guard Cavalry suffered severe losses, and the Allies were still able to retreat in good order without leaving any prisoners or guns.

During the charge Gen Laferrière-Lévèque, commander of the Scouts Brigade, lost a leg, and Col Testot-Ferry – who lost his second horse when his men overran the Russian artillery – took over command of the brigade. The Emperor decorated several Scouts on the battlefield of Craonne; he made the wounded Col Testot-Ferry – whose uniform was torn to pieces, and who had lost his colpack – a baron of the Empire and commander in the Legion of Honour.

Laon, 9–10 March

Although he had only some 30,000 men at his immediate disposal, Napoleon continued to advance on Blücher's army of about 85,000 Russians and Prussians at Laon. He had sent orders to Marshal Marmont to march north to join him from Meaux with the 9,500 men of his VI Corps, intending that they should turn the Allies' eastern flank; but while Marmont lingered, Blücher decided to force a major battle.

On 9 March, Gen von Wartenburg surprised Marmont near Festieux south-east of Laon, and routed his force, which was saved from total collapse only by a staunch fight put up by two small parties of the Imperial Guard. On the next day Napoleon's army was holding positions immediately below Laon on its steep hill. He advanced; but although an attack by the Guard

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Count Vincent Szepticki became a first lieutenant in the Polish Light Horse of the Imperial Guard on 12 March 1808; serving in Spain, he had two horses shot under him at Medina del Rio Seco, and distinguished himself at Bellorado. A captain from 19 June 1809, he was commissioned with this rank into the 3rd Scouts on 1 January 1814. At the battle of Rheims on 13 March he charged at the head of his squadron, capturing an entire Prussian infantry battalion of Gen Saint-Priest's command.

Cavalry, including some Scout units, pushed Allied troops back towards the city walls, one of the French corps was driven back in headlong retreat, and the Emperor was obliged to withdraw in the late afternoon. The Allied supremacy in numbers was so great that victory was beyond his grasp, and he marched south-west towards Soissons, leaving Blücher inactive for the moment. French losses are generally put at around 6,000 men killed and wounded, to the Allies' 4,000 casualties.

Napoleon stayed for two days in Soissons, sorting out state affairs and reorganizing the army. The last few days had cost the Imperial Guard some 3,000 men, mainly from the Cavalry and Young Guard – Napoleon wrote that these corps were melting away like snow. Many of his generals were wounded: Nansouty, wounded and sick, had to leave his command after the battle of Craonne, and was replaced by Gen Sébastiani. General Colbert still commanded the 1st Division of the Guard Cavalry, but since 17 February Gen Exelmans had replaced Gen Guyot at the head of the 2nd Division. General Letort had replaced the wounded Gen Laferrière-Lévèque, now commanding the 3rd Division consisting of 1,800 men from the Mounted Chasseurs, Mounted Grenadiers and Scouts.

Rheims, 13 March

On 12 March, news arrived that Rheims has been taken by the Russian corps of Gen Saint-Priest, re-establishing communications between the armies of Schwarzenberg and Blücher. Without losing a minute, Napoleon ordered a hazardous march across the front of the Army of Silesia towards Rheims. Attacking unexpectedly on the morning of 13 March, he caught the Allied corps totally by surprise, and smashed it. The Scouts of the Guard made detours along minor roads and lanes, and entered Rheims unnoticed. The Guards of Honour, commanded by Gen de Ségur, competed in bravery with their brothers-in-arms in the 1st Regiment of Scouts. General Saint-Priest was mortally wounded; his corps suffered about 6,000 casualties to 700 French, and the Russians and Prussians fled in disarray to Laon, Rethel and Châlons.

The actions at Craonne and Laon had cost Napoleon's army some 12,000 men; and on 16 March, still at Rheims, the Emperor gave orders for the reorganization of the Cavalry of the Guard, as follows:

1st Division (Gen Colbert)
600 men of the Polish lancers of the Line (Gen Pac)
180 men of the 2nd (Dutch) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard
6 guns of the Polish Light Artillery

This total of 780 men were to be augmented with another 200 men from the Red Lancers; and by another 1,200 of Gen Pac's Polish lancers – these latter were already on the march to join the army – to give an intended total of nearly 2,200 men.

2nd Division (Gen Exelmans)
600 men of the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard
500 men of the Dragoons of the Guard
200 men of the 2nd Regiment of Scouts of the Guard
200 men of the 3rd Regiment of Scouts of the Guard,
for a total of 1,500 men.

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3rd Division (Gen Letort)
800 men of the Mounted Chasseurs of the Guard
800 men of the Mounted Grenadiers of the Guard
200 men of the 1st Regiment of Scouts of the Guard, totalling 1,800 men.

On 15 March the Guard Cavalry mustered 4,280 men, and another 1,500 were to leave their depots the next day, bringing the numbers to 5,780. The addition of Gen Pac's detachment of 1,200 Line lancers to the 1st Division would raise this strength to more than 6,000 men. But these were theoretical figures: when Napoleon left Rheims on 17 March and concentrated his force around Epernay, his Guard Cavalry actually present and fit for service numbered no more than 3,000, and his whole army no more than 23,000 men.

Lieutenant-General Count de Saint-Priest (1776–1814). This former émigré commanded a corps of some 15,000 men, mainly troops coming from the sieges of Torgau and Wittenberg, when he took the French city of Rheims and restored communications between the Armies of Bohemia and Silesia. The next day, 13 March 1814, Napoleon led an audacious attack on the city in person. Saint-Priest had failed to take the necessary defensive precautions; his command was soundly beaten, and he himself was wounded at an early stage of the fighting. Taken to Laon, he died two weeks later, after being awarded the Order of St George by the Tsar.

Napoleon had held Blücher north-east of Paris; but further south, Schwarzenberg was now driving back the three French corps left in his path. As the Allies converged on Paris, Napoleon boldly struck out south-east for Saint Dizier on the upper Marne, hoping that the threat to both Blücher's and Schwarzenberg's lines of communication would distract their attention from the capital, and that he might open links with French forces still holding the fortress cities of Metz and Verdun.

Arcis-sur-Aube, 20–21 March

Leaving the corps of Mortier and Marmont in front of Blücher, Napoleon directed his handful of troops towards the Allied rear lines in Champagne. During this advance the Cavalry of the Guard saw action, on 18 and 19 March, at Sommesous, Fère-Champenoise, Alibaudières, Plancy and Méry. The speed with which the Emperor moved his troops from left to right was dazzling, and in the past it had always rendered his opponents indecisive. When Schwarzenberg arrived at the River Aube on 19 March, Gen Letort and the 1st Regiment of Scouts attacked his rearguard, capturing a train of pontoons and its full equipment. For once, however, such surprises did not have the desired effect: when he arrived before Arcis-sur-Aube to threaten Gen Wrede's garrison, the Emperor found the Army of Bohemia in front of him, ready at last to fight a major battle, and outnumbering him five to one. This would be his last major action against the armies of the Sixth Coalition.

By 11am on 20 March, the first day of the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, Ney and Sébastiani had driven Gen Wrede out of the town, and at 1pm Napoleon arrived on the north bank of the Aube and crossed the bridge. A fierce cavalry action occupied the late afternoon and part of the night, the French gaining the advantage and holding their ground. However, overnight Schwarzenberg reinforced his army to some 80,000 men, facing just 28,000 available French troops. Ever cautious when facing the greatest soldier of his age, Schwarzenberg still suspected a trap, and did not press his advantage in numbers until 3pm on the afternoon of 21 March. By this time most of the French had crossed back over the Aube to safety. Marshal Oudinot, commanding the rearguard, held off the Austrians and their allies until 6pm in bitter

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General Count Pac (1778–1835). Polish by birth, he served in the army of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and became a general of division on 1 January 1814. His command during the Campaign of France, from 4 January 1814, consisted of two Polish Line lancer regiments (then numbered 1st & 2nd), serving with the Guard and the Scout regiments. With these troops he helped take the bridge at Berry-au-Bac on 5 March; he would be wounded at Arcis-sur-Aube on 20 March.

fighting, before making good his retreat and destroying the bridges behind him.

On one occasion the 1,600 men of the Mounted Grenadiers, Mounted Chasseurs and 1st Regiment of Scouts were attacked by enemy cavalry 4,000 strong; they fought for hours on end before being obliged to retreat. The Emperor himself had a lucky escape when his entourage were attacked by Cossacks. The duty squadrons came to his aid; and Col Testot-Ferry, also noticing the danger, charged with his Scouts in order to relieve the Emperor. His horse was killed, and Testot-Ferry was captured by the Cossacks. The 3rd Regiment of Scouts were commanded that day by *Chef d'escadron* Jankowski; and the Emperor's duty squadron, led by *Chef d'escadron* Zielonga, covered themselves with glory. Although the Guard Cavalry managed to withdraw successfully the 2nd and 3rd Regiments of Scouts were badly mauled, suffering heavy losses and leaving prisoners behind (see casualty list, page 44).

General Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, returning from Versailles, had brought 1,500 reinforcements for the Guard Cavalry, but they were so exhausted by their forced marches that they were barely able to stay in the saddle. The battle had cost the French 3,000 casualties and the Allies about 4,000; but it gained Napoleon little.

* * *

To the north, only the reduced corps of Marshals Marmont and Mortier stood in the path of an Allied advance on Paris, with a combined strength of just 15,000 men. They might have been saved if the Allies had remained mesmerized – as usual – by the threat that they always associated with Napoleon himself; on 23 March the Allied leadership had indeed decided to march towards him in force. The following day, however, letters sent from Paris to the Emperor fell into their hands, and they learned of his intentions in striking into their rear. (Some sources even claim that the former foreign minister Talleyrand – as always, looking ahead in his own best interests – wrote to the Tsar of Russia in extraordinary terms: 'You have the power to do everything, and yet you dare nothing – so take a risk, for once!') This changed the Allied strategy: for once they would dare to ignore Napoleon's dazzling manoeuvres, and would march in force towards Paris with all speed. Only Gen Winzingerode would be detached to follow Napoleon, in order to deceive him into thinking that he had succeeded in distracting the Allied armies. Marmont and Mortier would be left to face the juggernaut on their own.

At La Fère-Champenoise on 25 March the two marshals made a desperate attempt to stop the Allies, but with odds of ten to one against them they were simply overrun, losing about one-third of their troops and many of their guns. The survivors fell back via Meaux, in terrible weather and with the Allies on their heels. On 28 March, Blücher's and Schwarzenberg's troops made contact at Meaux, and pressed ahead

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together. Arriving before the capital on 29 March, the remnants of Marmont's and Mortier's command were deployed on the high ground north of Paris; and soon, from the heart of the city, Parisians could see the campfires of the enemy armies on the surrounding hills. For the first time since the Norsemen surrounded the city in AD 885, Paris was besieged by foreign troops.

Saint Dizier, 26 March

Meanwhile, 120 miles to the east, Napoleon halted at Saint Dizier to concentrate his forces. He pushed his light cavalry on north-eastwards towards Bar-le-Duc in order to capture the bridges intact; and he had letters sent to the different garrisons in fortresses and besieged towns, ordering them to break out and come to his aid – he hoped for an extra 50,000 troops from such sources.

On 26 March, the battle of Saint Dizier took place. Seeing enemy cavalry coming up, the Emperor believed that he had successfully drawn Schwarzenberg's army towards himself; in fact, it was only Winzingerode's detached corps. The French beat them, and in this last fight of the campaign even the Emperor drew his sword, leading his Guard Cavalry forward. The Scouts fought one of the finest actions of their brief career, chasing Russian cavalry from the field. Saint Dizier proved that even with a handful of hungry and exhausted troops, Napoleon could still be dangerous. But the following day, the French captured an Allied bulletin which revealed the Coalition's intended march on Paris. Under pressure from his entourage, Napoleon dropped his immediate idea of continuing the fight deep behind the Allied line of advance (even though this might have had a chance of succeeding); he turned back towards Paris, racing ahead of his army.

Paris, 30–31 March

On 29 March, the united Cavalry of the Guard marched from Montiérender to Vandoeuvres, following the Emperor. At the bridge of Doulancourt, Napoleon received messages from Paris while the cavalry corps of Gen Sébastiani was riding past him. He called for his senior orderly officer, Gourgaud, and ordered him to take the head of the cavalry columns, with the three least tired Polish lancer squadrons, and to dash for the bridges at Troyes in order to capture them before the Allies could destroy them. Despite the exhaustion of men and horses, Gourgaud reached his objective that night, soon followed by the Emperor.

At daybreak on 30 March the Emperor continued his march to Villeneuve-l'Archevèque, escorted by the duty squadrons of the Old Guard commanded by Gen Guyot. At Villeneuve-l'Archevèque he commandeered three coaches and, accompanied only by his immediate entourage, continued his journey to Fontainebleau, where they arrived at 5pm that afternoon. At 11pm in the evening the Emperor was at Fontaines-de-Juvisy, waiting by the roadside while the horses were changed, when some cavalry rode up from Paris. They brought him the news of the capitulation of the city to the Allies.

* * *

In Paris, Gen Ornano had still commanded the combined elements of the Imperial Guard which were stationed at the various regimental depots. The cavalry consisted of ten reduced squadrons of Mounted Grenadiers,

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Chasseurs, Light Horse Lancers, Dragoons, Mamelukes and Scouts, the majority of the latter from the 3rd Regiment; these 800-odd Scouts were placed by Gen Ornano under the command of Gen Dautancourt who, after the battle of Rheims, had returned to the capital on sick leave.

On 29 March a detachment of the 3rd Scouts, serving with the Polish *Krakus*, charged at Claye, while another detachment left Paris to escort the Empress to Rambouillet. With such a dispersal of his force, Gen Dautancourt could soon rely on only some 330 Scouts. On the evening of the 29th the Parisian Guard Cavalry Brigade had an encounter with Cossacks near Le Bourget, then bivouacked between Vilette and Chapelle, ready to mount their horses at daybreak.

At 5am the next morning Paris, defended by approximately 30,000 men, was attacked by about 110,000 of the 150,000 Allied troops present. (Even now the Allied commanders were nervous of the possibility of a sudden attack by the force that Napoleon was leading back to the capital.) In ten hours of fighting the French managed to inflict heavy casualties, killing or wounding something between 8,000 and 12,000 of the attackers; but the French defenders, much fewer in number, also suffered some 4,000 casualties, and were handicapped by shortages of weapons and ammunition.

On 30 March, Maj Kozietulski of the 3rd Regiment of Scouts mounted a series of attacks on Allied troops, falling back under control after inflicting casualties and then regrouping to fight as skirmishers. Soon, however, Gen Dautancourt's Scouts were ordered to retreat, under a punishing enemy artillery fire, towards the road between Batignolles and Saint Ouen in order to cover the heights of Montmartre. Positioned near the vineyards that grew around what was then still a country village, the Scouts suffered casualties including Sub-adjutant-major Pélissier, who was seriously wounded while standing close to Gen Dautancourt.

Lancer of the Old Guard companies of the 1st Scouts; while he seems to handle his weapon with confidence, its leather strap should really be around his right forearm. The cords and tassels flying from his neck are those used to sling the pelisse from the shoulder when it was not worn as a jacket. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

Betrayed by turncoat politicians like Talleyrand and the police chief Fouché, and short of numbers, weapons and equipment, the troops lost their hope and fighting spirit; Gen Dautancourt wrote in his memoirs that the only thing that could have steadied them was the presence of Napoleon in person. The retreat on Montmartre had brought Allied cannon within range of the city. The Russian infantry captured a redoubt in Pere Lachaise cemetery after hard fighting; it was impossible to hold back the waves of Allied troops, and Dautancourt's men withdrew into the city itself, rallying on the Boulevard des Italiens. There the officers and their men were told by citizens that a convention had been signed between the Allied commanders and the French politicians. Marshal Marmont (to his lasting disgrace) agreed to an armistice, handing Paris over to the Allies with effect

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from the next day, 31 March. Disappointed, the Scouts received an order to march to Villejuif on the road towards Fontainebleau, where the Emperor had halted with the rest of his army.

Some last actions still took place. On the morning of 31 March, Capt Horaczko of the 3rd Regiment of Scouts was sent with his troop to Vitry and Choisy-le-Roi, where he was to blow up the bridges in order to secure the French army's positions. It would be the last action in the brief history of the three regiments of Scouts of the Imperial Guard. With all fighting practically at an end, Gen Dautancourt led his brigade to Fontainebleau. There, on 11 April 1814, the Emperor finally agreed to the Allied terms and signed his abdication, taking leave of his beloved Imperial Guard.

* * *

After Napoleon's first abdication, the 1st Regiment of Scouts was disbanded by an ordinance of the restored King Louis XVIII, and the men were transferred to different Line cavalry regiments in the royal army: 8 officers and 105 men (the 1st Sqn) went to the 4th Mounted Chasseurs, 8 officers and 34 men (2nd Sqn) to the 6th Hussars, 6 officers and 43 men (3rd Sqn) to the 8th Mounted Chasseurs, and 12 officers and 53 men (4th Sqn) to the 12th Mounted Chasseurs. The Guards of Honour returned to their own regiments to be disbanded; and more than one Scout simply went home without waiting for his formal dismissal.

Lancer of the 1st Scouts wearing the *manteau*, the voluminous cavalry cloak-coat with sleeves and a detachable cape. His waterproof shako cover has the back flap lowered to protect his neck. His lance butt is placed in one of the black leather cups that was strapped outside each stirrup. At the point of balance a wrist strap of white leather was attached, and worn around the upper arm when riding. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

The dismantling of the 2nd Regiment took place on 19 June at Poitiers. What was left of the 1st Sqn was transferred to the 2nd Hussars, the 2nd Sqn to the 5th Hussars, the 3rd Sqn to the 2nd Mounted Chasseurs, and the 4th Sqn to the 3rd Mounted Chasseurs. Again, some of the men simply drifted away to their homes, and by their names in the rolls we find the notation 'deserted'.

After Napoleon's abdication all Polish troops were removed from the French payroll, and transferred to serve in the Russian army. On 7 June the remaining Polish troops of the 3rd Regiment of Scouts left France for Poland: 46 officers with their 119 horses, and 551 enlisted men with 536 horses.

When Napoleon returned to France in spring 1815 he restored the Imperial Guard, and decreed on 15 May that a regiment of *'éclaireurs-lanciers'* (Scout-Lancers) would be organized; however, the outcome of the battle of Waterloo on 18 June prevented its formation.

OFFICER CASUALTIES

Casualties after Martinien's *Tableaux par Corps et par Batailles des Officiers tués et blesses pendant les Guerres de l'Empire (1805–1815):*

1st Regiment of Scouts
Lt Josselin, wounded at Tournotte, 7 January 1814
Lt Drion, wounded near Brienne, 24 January

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Capts Quentin & Richard, Lts Renaux, Joubert, Samy and Spigre,wounded at Craonne, 7 March
Lt Nepoty, wounded at Laon, 10 March
Lt Zickel, wounded at Arcis-sur-Aube, 20 March
S/Lt Lenglier, wounded at Paris, 30 March
2nd Regiment of Scouts
Lt Allard, wounded in forward outposts, 24 February
S/Lt Luzerna, wounded during reconnaissance, 3 March
Capts Deleau & Gaietté wounded, Lt AdjMaj Morin killed at Craonne, 7 March; Capt Gaietté died of wounds, 26 March
Lt Bourdillon, wounded at Laon, 9 March
Capt Bombrain & Lt Bourdillon, wounded at Rheims, 12 March
Captain Moll, killed in forward outposts, 15 March
Capt Rouxelin de Formigny, Lts Jonglas, Rey & Belley, S/Lts Certorio, Sevin, Degaux & Darchambaux, wounded at Arcis-sur-Aube, 20 March
S/Lt Luzernia, wounded at Paris, 30 March
3rd Regiment of Scouts
Sqn Ldrs Szepticki & Zaluski, Capt AdjMaj Kozycki, Capts Toedwen & Zablocki, Lt AdjMaj Rousselet, Lts Jordan, Mankowski, Visniewski & Paskiewicz, S/Lts Strzelecki & Kosicki wounded at Arcis-sur-Aube, 20 March
Capt Rosziewicz, Lts Jordan, Gadon & Echandi, wounded at Paris, 30 March

3rd Regiment of Scouts; note the striped lancer girdle, centre. The young trumpeter at right has aiguillettes; these, and the cap cords worn by him and the NCO at left are in mixed silver and crimson. Mixed sky-blue and crimson cords are also mentioned as being worn by trumpeters. (Pierre Benigni; former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

However, this list is incomplete. It does not mention Col Testor-Ferry (1st Regt), wounded at Craonne; or Sqn Ldr Starzynski & Capt Zielonga (3rd Regt), wounded in February – indeed, the list for the 3rd Scouts only starts at Arcis-sur-Aube on 20 March. As already mentioned, the 3rd fought together with the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard, and many of their casualties are probably listed on the muster rolls of that regiment.

Brunon, in his book on the Scouts of the Guard, states that the 1st Regiment suffered about 13 officer and 50 enlisted casualties; the 2nd, 17 officers and about 100 enlisted men. The casualties of the 3rd Scouts were probably close to those of the 2nd Regiment.

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THE PLATES

A: 1st REGIMENT (SCOUT-GRENADIERS)

A1: Colonel Claude Testot-Ferry in campaign dress, 1814

The 1st Regiment – *Éclaireurs-Grenadiers de la Garde* – were created by drafts upon the Guards of Honour, and the three Old Guard companies were uniformed like them in hussar style, with dark green pelisses and dolmans trimmed with silver or white lace and cording, and grey pantaloons. Colonel Testot-Ferry himself came from the Dragoons of the Guard, but wears his new regimentals; from a description of the damage to his uniform sustained in the thick of the fighting at Craonne we know that he wore a hussar colpack rather than a shako – this was a matter of personal choice for officers. (In this reconstruction the tall white plume of a regimental staff officer has been omitted.) His dolman survives in the former Brunon Collection (see right), and we take from that the rank lace on his sleeves – five silver *piques*, within a broad frame of foliate lace.

A2: Officer in undress uniform

After a contemporary portrait, this figure shows a slightly bell-topped shako, a shape fashionable at the end of the Empire. The dark green *habit* with red facings and piping is in the style of the Mounted Chasseurs of the Guard, worn over a scarlet waistcoat laced with silver, and Hungarian-style breeches and boots. Note also the silver aiguillettes of the Guard officer's undress uniform – not strictly regulation for the parent Guards of Honour or the Scouts, but certainly tolerated. Given that the regiment's officers came from several different units of the Guard and Line light cavalry, such details as the belt and the pattern of sabre carried would have varied on an individual basis.

A3: Officer in pelisse

This lieutenant – his rank identified by the two *piques* on his sleeves – is taken from a contemporary picture, including the unusually bright shade of green. Interesting points include the pickers for his pistols, on a chain fastened to a top button; the grenade badge on his pouch belt, the scarlet stripes on his pantaloons, and the *manteau* rolled at the pommel of his saddle. The red ribbon of the Legion of Honour is just visible on his left breast.

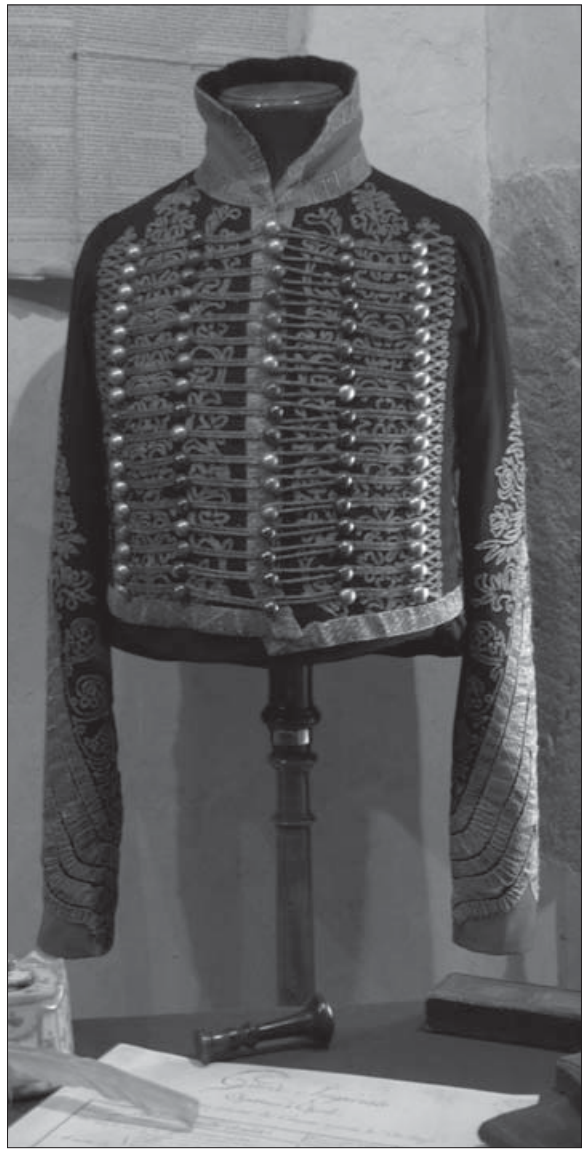
B: 1st REGIMENT (SCOUT-GRENADIERS)

B1: Trooper, Old Guard company, full dress

This soldier of an Old Guard company – the 1st and 2nd of the 1st Squadron, and the 4th (but not the 3rd) of the 2nd Squadron – has arrived at his new regiment from the 1st Regiment of Guards of Honour. He retains its uniform, complete with red shako; only the shako ornaments have been changed. The surviving inventories show – unsurprisingly – that only about half the men of these companies were issued new pelisses, and virtually none received new Hungarian breeches. However, the saddlery and harness of his horse have been simplified, and troopers of the 1st and 2nd Regiments did not use the shabraque. His slung carbine identifies him as a member of the second rank, not issued with a lance.

B2: Trooper, Old Guard company, campaign dress

Much of the Scouts' campaigning in early 1814 was carried out in punishing winter weather, so the pelisse must very often have been worn as a jacket when in the field. A contemporary picture shows this almost cylindrical shako, with a tall red plume and a top band of interlaced red rings. As a front-rank man he carries a lance; the 1812 model was 2.26m (7ft 5in) long overall, with a black-painted hardwood shaft and a 21cm (8½in) head. Unlike other lancer regiments, the Scouts did not use a lance-pennon.



Dolman of Col Testot-Ferry of the 1st Regiment of Scouts. It is of rich dark emerald green, with scarlet facings at collar and cuff, five rows of silver buttons, and lavish silver braid and cord decoration. Above the five *piques* of his rank an extra border of embroidery runs far up the sleeves; the Emperor tried to discourage extravagant uniforms, but such embellishments for a senior officer were certainly not considered excessive. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

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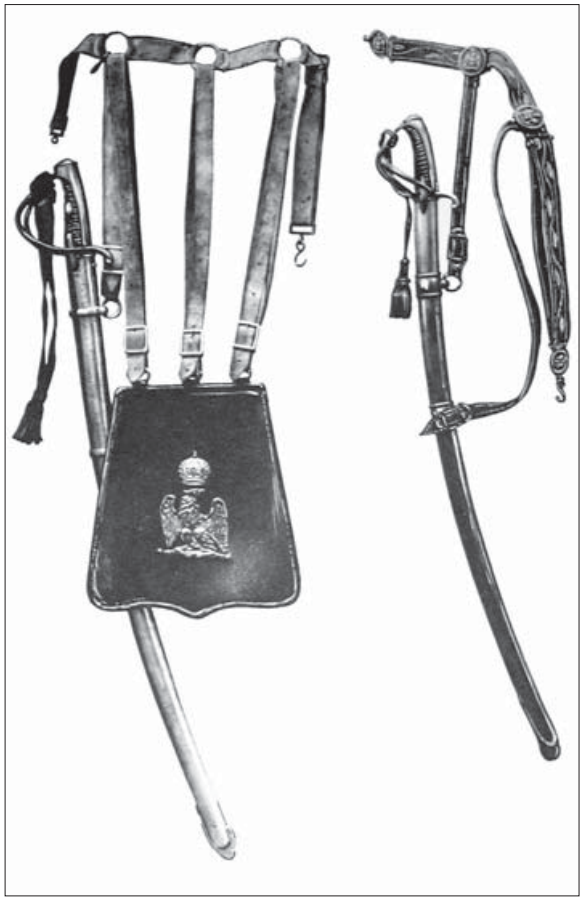
B3: Non-commissioned officer, Old Guard company, campaign dress
A contemporary engraving shows these trousers with a red stripe, very extensive black leather reinforcement and white metal buttons at the bottom only; and also the portmanteau (valise), with white lace and red piping around the ends. This veteran of the Guards of Honour has that branch's NCOs' distinction of mixed silver-and-green lace and cords on the pelisse. However, the inventories show that only a handful of dolmans with this distinction were supplied, and of those the only ones to be issued were worn by NCOs working at the depot where they were in store. Note that he has clipped his pistol to his carbine belt, by its trigger guard.

C: 1st REGIMENT (SCOUT-GRENADIERS)

C1: Trooper, Young Guard company, campaign dress
This conscript, reconstructed after a contemporary manuscript, wears the regulation dress for the Young Guard elements – the 3rd and 4th Squadrons, and the 3rd Company in the 2nd Squadron – including the short *habit-veste* or 'Kinski' in the style of the *Chasseurs à cheval* of the Line regiments, in dark green with crimson facings. The shoulder straps, pointed at the outer ends, are in green with crimson piping. The inventories show that these jackets were supplied and issued. Although not issued with a carbine, this front-rank lancer retains the double sling belt, using its pouch for his pistol ammunition – only lance-armed men received a pistol. The newly drafted troopers were given only brief training at the depot and on their way to the front, and are described as holding the lance in both hands when they went into combat – the proper management of the lance and reins required a much longer period of instruction than the Allied offensive of late December 1813 allowed. Once again, note the simple saddlery and harness used by the Scouts.



C2: Trooper, Young Guard company, full dress
Again reconstructed after a contemporary manuscript, this soldier is a rear-rank man armed with a carbine and sabre only. The inventories show that despite the haste with which the new Imperial Guard cavalry units were raised in winter 1813/14, the bulk of the prescribed clothing and equipment was indeed supplied and issued, including the grey trousers, scarlet waistcoats, and green saddle portmanteaux. However, about 20 per cent of the sabretaches supplied were not issued and remained in store.

C3: Trumpeter, campaign dress
Reconstructed after a contemporary manuscript. The records confirm that 19 pelisses in the Guard Cavalry trumpeters' usual sky-blue were indeed supplied and issued to the 1st Regiment, including two with silver-and-green distinctions for *brigadier-trompettes* – trumpet-corporals.

D: 2nd REGIMENT (SCOUT-DRAGOONS)

D1 & 2: Troopers, campaign dress
These *éclaireurs-dragons* – both front-rank men, with lances, sabres, and single pistols – are reconstructed from contemporary manuscripts, and from the drawings of Pierre Louis Fergier and Pierre Benigni in the former Brunon Collection at Château de l'Empéri. We have much less inventory evidence from the 2nd Regiment than survives from the records of the 1st, so they are shown in the regiment's regulation uniform, in the style of Mounted Chasseurs of the Line regiments. The dark green *habit-veste* and trousers are faced, piped and striped in crimson, with white 'metal'. The rankers' crimson shakos are of an unusual shape for the period, but it is worth remembering that the Scouts were a new kind of troops and were 'experimental' in a number of ways. Note the *aurore*-coloured cockade loop and cap lines; the latter, to prevent the loss of the shako in action, is separated to pass around the torso under the right arm.

D3: Trumpeter
This variation on the uniform shown as C3 is taken from the famous *'Petits Soldats d'Alsace'* cards. It shows a sky-blue shako, dolman and pelisse, a more scarlet shade of facings and trim, and the use of a shabraque – normally believed to have been used only by the 3rd Regiment. The 2nd Regiment was assembled in haste from men coming from at least ten different units of the Old and Young Guard, the Line dragoons and lancers, the former Royal Guard of the King of

(Left) Trooper's sabre of light cavalry Model *An XI*; sabre belt with black plain sabretache and white metal crowned eagle, as carried by troopers of the Old Guard companies of the 1st Regiment.
(Right) Mounted Chasseurs-style officer's sabre, as carried by the 1st and 2nd Regiments. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

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Spain, and the *Gendarmes d'Espagne*; there would certainly have been variations in dress between the trumpeters of one company and another.

E: 2nd REGIMENT (SCOUT-DRAGOONS)

E1: Trumpet-major

E2: Trumpeter

Both these images are taken from drawings published in the journal *Le Passepoil*, which appeared between the 1920s and 1940s. The evidence upon which they are based is unknown; but this respected journal published the work of the leading militaria researchers and collectors of its day, including several who are now household names, and its generally high standards of care may give us some confidence in the interpretations that it accepted for publication. The points to note include:

E1: The sky-blue jacket has a crimson-faced plastron, in the style of a Polish *kurtka*; its gold 'metal' includes lace around the cuffs and plastron, double lace around the collar, and double lace sleeve chevrons. The shako has gilt furniture, and mixed gold-and-crimson lines, passing around the neck only and terminating in double 'flounders', here worn at the left shoulder. The trumpet cord is also mixed gold-and-crimson. The trumpet-major uses a shabraque and portmanteau with borders laced in gold and piped in crimson, the former bearing a gold Imperial eagle in the corners. His bridle is ornamented with a brass crescent on a throat lash.

E2: The trumpeter's shako has an *aurore* cockade loop and cap lines. His uniform is similar to that of E1, but his *habit-veste* is the usual plain, single-breasted Kinski without plastrons. Like the trumpet-major's, his pointed shoulder-straps are of sky-blue piped in crimson; but his crimson collar and cuffs are trimmed with *aurore* braid, as is his portmanteau. He has the conventional simple saddle and bridle, without a shabraque, and with a sky-blue *manteau* rolled at the pommel.

An officer's shako of the late empire, 1813–1814, of the *rouleau* type apparently worn by officers of the 2nd Regiment of Scouts. These were taller than the normal shakos such as those worn by the 1st Regiment. Note the leather flap at the rear; the top band of interlacing rings (in the Scouts, silver for officers and senior NCOs, and scarlet for troopers); the pompon, loop and cockade. (Former Brunon Collection, Château de l'Empéri)

E3: Officer, full dress

This figure is reconstructed after contemporary pictures, and work by Pierre Benigni. His shako furniture is all gold, as is the 'metal' on his uniform. His sword and pouch belts are of black leather with heavy gold decoration, and the pouch is gilded. He has a small saddle cover of false pantherskin over a gold-laced shabraque, which bears the imperial crown in the front corners and certainly the eagle in the rear corners. His bridle and harness have gilt fittings and are lavishly decorated. Most of the officers of this regiment came from the Old and Young Guard, and two of the squadron leaders from the *Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde*, where such displays of wealth and style were normal.

F & G: THE 3rd REGIMENT (SCOUT-LANCERS) IN ACTION; EASTERN FRANCE, FEBRUARY–MARCH 1814

This impression shows a typical clash between Polish *éclaireurs-lanciers* and Russian Cossacks of the rearguard of the Army of Silesia, during one the many marches and counter-marches through the flat countryside of Champagne. The Scouts are shown in campaign dress as reconstructed by Pierre Benigni; the foreground figure, centre left, is an officer.

H: 3rd REGIMENT (SCOUT-LANCERS)

H1: Officer, full dress

This reconstruction after a contemporary portrait shows – unsurprisingly – the uniform of the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers of the Guard, from which the 3rd Scouts were largely raised and to which they were attached, serving essentially as a single unit. The Turkish-blue *kurtka* and tight pantaloons are faced and striped crimson, with officers' silver embroidery and distinctions; this officer has a single fringed epaulette on his left shoulder and a trefoil and Guard aiguillettes on the right. Note the very wide belt – see portrait on page 23. The silver-faced belts have gilt and silvered ornaments, as does his *czapka* lancer cap.

H2: Trooper, full dress

This figure is after a reconstruction by Benigni. The main differences from the uniform of the 1st (Polish) Light Horse Lancers are the white contre-epaulettes in place of fringed epaulettes, the striped white-and-dark-blue girdle as worn by the Polish lancers of Line regiments, and the plain grey overalls. While the 3rd Scouts were officially issued with shabraques, there is no reason to suppose that they were always used on campaign.

H3: Trumpeter, full dress

Another reconstruction after Benigni. Note the white crown of the *czapka*, and the mixed-colour trumpet cord, cap lines, right shoulder epaulette and left shoulder aiguillettes.

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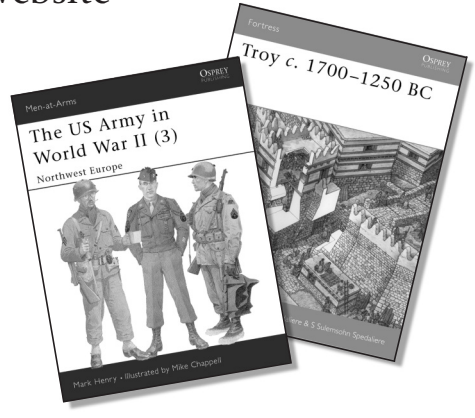

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First published in Great Britain in 2006 by Osprey Publishing,
Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 0PH, UK
44-02 23rd St, Suite 219, Long Island City, NY 11101, USA
Email: info@ospreypublishing.com

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Transferred to digital print on demand 2010

First published 2006
2nd impression 2009

Printed and bound by PrintOnDemand-Worldwide.com, Peterborough, UK

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Print ISBN: 978 1 84176 956 1
PDF ebook ISBN: 978 1 78096 417 1
ePub ebook ISBN: 978 1 78096 415 7

Editor: Martin Windrow
Page layouts by Alan Hamp
Index by Glyn Sutcliffe
Originated by PPS Grasmere, Leeds, UK

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